HONI·SOIT·QVI·MAL·Y·PENSE

Langl.
o.
1015
1

COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH AUTHORS

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 374.

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

BY

CHARLES READE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

By the same Author,

"LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG" . . .	1 vol.
THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH	2 vols.
HARD CASH	3 vols.
PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE	2 vols.
A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION	2 vols.
PEG WOFFINGTON	1 vol.
CHRISTIE JOHNSTONE	1 vol.
A SIMPLETON	2 vols.
THE WANDERING HEIR	1 vol.
A WOMAN-HATER	2 vols.
READIANA	1 vol.
SINGLEHEART AND DOUBLEFACE	1 vol.

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

A MATTER OF FACT ROMANCE.

BY

CHARLES READE.

COPYRIGHT EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1856.

KÖNIGL. BAYER. BIBLIOTHEK
BAMBERG

THIS ATTEMPT AT A SOLID FICTION

IS WITH THEIR PERMISSION DEDICATED

TO

THE PRESIDENT, FELLOWS, AND DEMIES OF
ST. MARY MAGDALEN COLLEGE,
OXFORD,

BY A GRATEFUL SON

OF THAT

ANCIENT, LEARNED, AND MOST
CHARITABLE HOUSE.

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND:"

A MATTER OF FACT ROMANCE.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE FIELDING cultivated a small farm in Berkshire.

This position is not so enviable as it was: years ago, the farmers of England, had they been as intelligent as other traders, could have purchased the English soil by means of the huge per centage it offered them.

But now, I grieve to say, a farmer must be as sharp as his neighbours, or like his neighbours he will break. What do I say? There are soils and situations where, in spite of intelligence and sobriety, he is almost sure to break; just as there are shops where the lively, the severe, the industrious, the lazy, are fractured alike.

This last fact I make mine by perambulating a certain great street every three months, and observing how name succeeds to name as wave to wave.

Readers hardened by "The Times" will not perhaps go so far as to weep over a body of traders for being reduced to the average condition of all other traders; but the individual trader, who fights for existence against unfair odds, is to be pitied whether his shop has plate glass or a barn door to it; and he is the more to be pitied when he is sober, intelligent, proud, sensitive, and unlucky.

George Fielding was all these, who, a few years ago, assisted by his brother William, tilled "The Grove" — as nasty a little farm as any in Berkshire.

Discontented as he was, the expression herein-before written would have seemed profane to young Fielding, for a farmer's farm and a sailor's ship have always something sacred in the sufferer's eyes, though one sends one to jail, and the other the other to Jones.

It was four hundred acres, all arable, and most of it poor sour land. George's father had one hundred acres grass with it, but this had been separated six years ago.

There was not a tree, nor even an old stump to show for this word "Grove."

But in the country oral tradition still flourishes.

There had been trees in "The Grove," only the title had outlived the timber a few centuries.

On the morning of our tale George Fielding might have been seen, near his own homestead, conversing with the Honourable Frank Winchester.

This gentleman was a character that will be common some day, but was nearly unique at the date of our story.

He had not an extraordinary intellect, but he had great natural gaiety, and under that he had enormous good sense; his good sense was really brilliant, he had a sort of universal healthy mind that I can't understand how people get.

He was deeply in love with a lady who returned his passion, but she was hopelessly out of his reach, because he had not much money or expectations; instead of sitting down railing, or sauntering about whining, what did me the Honourable Frank Winchester? He looked over England for the means of getting this money, and not finding it there, he surveyed the globe and selected Australia, where, they told him, a little money turns to a deal, instead of dissolving in the hand like a lozenge in the mouth, as it does in London.

So here was an earl's son (in this age of commonplace events) going to Australia with five thousand pounds, as sheep farmer and general speculator.

He was trying hard to persuade George Fielding to accompany him as bailiff or agricultural adviser and manager.

He knew the young man's value, but to do him justice his

aim was not purely selfish; he was aware that Fielding had a bad bargain in "The Grove," and the farmer had saved his life at great personal risk one day that he was seized with cramp bathing in the turbid waters of Cleve millpool, and he wanted to serve him in return. This was not his first attempt of the kind, and but for one reason perhaps he might have succeeded.

"You know me and I know you," said Mr. Winchester to George Fielding; "I must have somebody to put me in the way: stay with me one year, and after that I'll square accounts with you about that thundering millpool."

"Oh! Mr. Winchester," said George hastily and blushing like fire, "that's an old story, sir; haven't you forgot that yet, sir?" with a sweet little half-cunning smile that showed he was glad it was not forgotten.

"Not quite," replied the young gentleman drily; "you shall have five hundred sheep and a run for them, and we will both come home rich and consequently respectable."

"It is a handsome offer sir, and a kind offer and like yourself sir; but transplanting one of us," continued George, "dear me sir it's like taking up an oak tree thirty years in the ground — besides — besides — did you ever notice my cousin Susanna, sir?"

"Notice her! why, do you think I am a heathen, and never go to the parish church? Miss Merton is a lovely girl; she sits in the pew by the pillar."

"Is'nt she, sir?" said George.

Mr. Winchester endeavoured to turn this adverse topic in his favour, he made a remark that produced no effect at the time. He said, "People don't go to Australia to die — they go to Australia to make money, and come home and marry — and it is what you must do — this 'Grove' is a millstone round your neck. Will you have a cigar, farmer?"

George consented, premising however that hitherto he had never got beyond a yard of clay, and after drawing a puff or two he took the cigar from his mouth, and looking at it, said, "I say, sir! seems to me the fire is uncommon near the chimbly." Mr. Winchester laughed; he then asked George to show him

the blacksmith's shop. "I must learn how to shoe a horse" said the honourable Frank.

"Well, I never!" thought George, "The first nob in the country, going to shoe a horse," but with his rustic delicacy he said nothing, and led Mr. Winchester to the blacksmith's shop.

Whilst this young gentleman is hammering nails into a horse's hoof, and Australia into an English farmer's mind, we must introduce other personages.

Susanna Merton was beautiful and good: George Fielding and she were acknowledged lovers, but marriage was not spoken of as a near event, and latterly old Merton had seemed cool whenever his daughter mentioned the young man's name.

Susanna appeared to like George, though not so warmly as he loved her; but at all events she accepted no other proffers of love: for all that she had, besides a host of admirers, other lovers besides George; and what is a great deal more singular, (for a woman's eye is quick as lightning in finding out who loves her,) there was more than one of whose passion she was not conscious.

William Fielding, George's brother, was in love with his brother's sweetheart, but though he trembled with pleasure when she was near him, he never looked at her except by stealth; he knew he had no business to love her.

On the morning of our tale Susan's father, old Merton, had walked over from his farm to "The Grove," and was inspecting a field behind George's house, when he was accosted by his friend Mr. Meadows, who had seen him, and giving his horse to a boy to hold had crossed the stubbles to speak to him.

Mr. Meadows was not a common man, and merits some preliminary notice.

He was what is called in the country "a lucky man;" everything he had done in life had prospered.

The neighbours admired, respected, and some of them even hated this respectable man, who had been a carter in the midst of them, and now at forty years of age was a rich corn-factor and land-surveyor.

"All this money cannot have been honestly got" said the envious ones among themselves; yet they could not put their finger on any dishonest action he had done: to the more candid the known qualities of the man accounted for his life of success.

This John Meadows had a cool head, an iron will, a body and mind alike indefatigable, and an eye never diverted from the great objects of sober industrious men — wealth and respectability: he had also the soul of business — method!

At one hour he was sure to be at church; at another, at market; in his office at a third; and at home when respectable men should be at home.

By this means Mr. Meadows was always to be found by any man who wanted to do business; and when you had found him, you found a man superficially coy perhaps, but at bottom always ready to do business, and equally sure to get the sunny side of it, and give you the windy.

Meadows was generally respected; by none more than by old Merton; and during the last few months the intimacy of these two men had ripened into friendship; the corn-factor often hooked his bridle to the old farmer's gate, and took a particular interest in all his affairs.

Such was John Meadows.

In person, he was a tall stout man, with iron grey hair, a healthy weather-coloured complexion, and a massive brow that spoke to the depth and force of the man's character.

"What, taking a look at the farm, Mr. Merton? it wants some of your grass put to it, doesn't it?"

"I never thought much of the farm," was the reply, "it lies cold, the sixty-acre field is well enough, but the land on the hill is as poor as death."

Now this idea, which Merton gave out as his, had dropped into him from Meadows three weeks before.

"Farmer," said Meadows in an under tone, "they are threshing out new wheat for the rent."

"You don't say so? why I didn't hear the flail going."

"They have just knocked off for dinner — you need not say

I told you, but Will Fielding was at the bank this morning, trying to get money on their bill, and the bank said No! They had my good word *too*. The people of the bank sent over to me."

They had his good word! but not his good tone! he had said "Well, their father was a safe man;" but the accent with which he eulogized the parent had somehow locked the bank cash-box to the children.

"I never liked it, especially of late," mused Merton. "But you see the young folk being cousins —"

"That is it, cousins," put in Meadows; "it is not as if she loved him with all her heart and soul; she is an obedient daughter isn't she?"

"Never gainsayed me in her life; she has a high spirit, but never with me, my word is law. You see she is a very religious girl is Susan."

"Well, then, a word from you would save her — but there — all that is your affair, not mine," added he.

"Of course it is," was the reply. "You are a true friend: I'll step round to the barn and see what is doing;" and away went Susan's father uneasy in his mind.

Meadows went to the 'Black Horse,' the village public-house, to see what farmers wanted to borrow a little money under the rose, and would pawn their wheat ricks, and pay twenty per cent. for that over-rated merchandize.

At the door of the public-house he was met by the village constable, and a stranger of gentlemanly address and clerical appearance; the constable wore a mysterious look and invited Meadows into the parlour of the public-house.

"I have news for you, sir," said he, "leastways I think so; your pocket was picked last Martinmas fair of three Farnborough bank-notes with your name on the back."

"It was!"

"Is this one of them?" said the man, producing a note.

Meadows examined it with interest, compared the number with a memorandum in his pocket-book, and pronounced that it was.

"Who passed it?" inquired he.

"A chap that has got the rest — a stranger — Robinson — that lodges at 'The Grove' with George Fielding; that is, if his name *is* Robinson, but we think he is a Londoner come down to take an airing. You understand, sir."

Meadows' eyes flashed actual fire: for so rich a man, he seemed wonderfully excited by this circumstance.

To an inquiry who was his companion, the constable answered sotto voce, "Gentleman from Bow-street, come to see if he knows him." The constable went on to inform Meadows that Robinson was out fishing somewhere, otherwise they would already have taken him; "but we will hang about the farm, and take him when he comes home."

"You had better be at hand, sir, to identify the notes," said the gentleman from Bow-street, whose appearance was clerical.

Meadows had important business five miles off: he postponed it. He wrote a line in pencil, put a boy upon his black mare, and hurried him off to the rendezvous, while he stayed and entered with strange alacrity into this affair. "Stay," cried he, "if he is an old hand he will twig the officer."

"Oh, I'm dark, sir," was the answer; "he won't know me till I put the darbies on him."

The two men then strolled as far as the village stocks, keeping an eye ever on the farm-house.

Thus a network of adverse events was closing round George Fielding this day.

He was all unconscious of them; he was in good spirits. Robinson had showed him how to relieve the temporary embarrassment that had lately depressed him.

"Draw a bill on your brother," said Robinson, "and let him accept it. The Farnborough Bank will give you notes for it: these country banks like any paper better than their own. I dare say they are right."

George had done this, and expected William every minute with this and other monies; and then Susanna Merton was to dine at 'The Grove' to-day, and this, though not an uncommon, was always a great event with poor George.

Dilly would not come to be killed just when he was wanted: in other words, Robinson, who had no idea how he was keeping people waiting, fished tranquilly till near dinner-time, neither taking nor being taken.

This detained Meadows in the neighbourhood of the farm, and was the cause of his rencontre with a very singular personage, whose visit he knew at sight must be to him.

As he hovered about among George Fielding's ricks, the figure of an old man slightly bowed but full of vigour stood before him. He had a long grey beard with a slight division in the centre, hair abundant but almost white, and a dark swarthy complexion that did not belong to England; his thick eyebrows also were darker than his hair, and under them was an eye like a royal jewel; his voice had the oriental richness and modulation — this old man was Isaac Levi; an oriental Jew who had passed half his life under the sun's eye, and now though the town of Farnborough had long been too accustomed to him to wonder at him, he dazzled any thoughtful stranger; so exotic and apart was he — so romantic a grain in a heap of vulgarity — he was as though a striped jasper had crept in among the paving-stones of their market-place, or a cactus grandiflora shone amongst the nettles of a Berkshire meadow.

Isaac Levi, unlike most Jews, was familiar with the Hebrew tongue, and this and the Eastern habits of his youth coloured his language and his thoughts, especially in moments of emotion, and above all, when he forgot the money-lender for a moment, and felt and thought as one of a great nation, depressed, but waiting for a great deliverance. He was a man of authority and learning in his tribe.

At sight of Isaac Levi Meadows' brow lowered, and he called out rather rudely without allowing the old gentleman to speak, "If you are come to talk to me about that house you are in you may keep your breath to cool your porridge."

Meadows had bought the house Isaac rented, and had instantly given him warning to leave.

Isaac, who had become strangely attached to the only place in which he had ever lived many years, had not doubted for a

moment that Meadows merely meant to raise the rent to its full value, so he had come to treat with his new landlord. "Mr. Meadows," said he persuasively "I have lived there twenty years — I pay a fair rent — but, if you think any one would give you more you shall lose nothing by me — I will pay a little more; and you know your rent is secure?"

"I do," was the answer.

"Thank you, sir! well, then —"

"Well, then, next Lady-day you turn out bag and baggage."

"Nay, sir," said Isaac Levi, "hear me, for you are younger than I. Mr. Meadows, when this hair was brown I travelled in the East; I sojourned in Madras and Benares, in Bagdad, Ispahan, Mecca, and Bassora, and found no rest. When my hair began to turn grey, I traded in Petersburgh, and Rome, and Paris, Vienna, and Lisbon, and other western cities, and found no rest. I came to this little town, where, least of all, I thought to pitch my tent for life, but here the God of my fathers gave me my wife, and here He took her to himself again —"

"What the deuce is all this to me, man?"

"Much, sir, if you are what men say; for men speak well of you; be patient, and hear me. Two children were born to me and died from me in the house you have bought; and there my Leah died also; and there at times in the silent hours I seem to hear their voices and their feet. In another house I shall never hear them — I shall be quite alone. Have pity on me, sir, an aged and a lonely man; tear me not from the shadows of my dead. Let me prevail with you?"

"No!" was the stern answer.

"No?" cried Levi, a sudden light darting into his eye; "then you must be an enemy of Isaac Levi?"

"Yes!" was the grim reply to this rapid inference.

"Ah!" cried the old Jew, with a sudden defiance, which he instantly suppressed. "And what have I done to gain your enmity, sir?" said he in a tone crushed by main force into mere regret.

"You lend money."

"A little, sir, now and then — a very little."

"That is to say, when the security is bad, you have no money in hand; but, when the security is good, nobody has ever found the bottom of Isaac Levi's purse."

"Our people," said Isaac apologetically, "can trust one another — they are not like yours. We are brothers, and that is why money is always forthcoming when the deposit is sound."

"Well," said Meadows, "what you are, I am; what I do on the sly you do on the sly, old thirty per cent."

"The world is wide enough for us both good sir —"

"It is!" was the prompt reply. "And it lies before you, Isaac. Go where you like, for the little town of Farnborough is not wide enough for me and any man that works my business for his own pocket —"

"But this is not enmity, sir."

Meadows gave a coarsish laugh. "You are hard to please," cried he. "I think you will find it is enmity."

"Nay! sir, this is but matter of profit and loss. Well, let me stay, and I promise you shall gain and not lose. Our people are industrious and skilful in all bargains, but we keep faith and covenant. So be it. Let us be friends. I covenant with you, and I swear by the tables of the law, you shall not lose one shilling per annum by me."

"I'll trust you as far as I can fling a bull by the tail. You gave me your history — take mine. I have always put my foot on whatever man or thing has stood in my way. I was poor, I am rich, and that is my policy."

"It is frail policy," said Isaac, firmly. "Some man will be sure to put his foot on you, soon or late."

"What, do you threaten me?" roared Meadows.

"No, sir," said Isaac, gently but steadily. "I but tell you what these old eyes have seen in every nation, and read in books that never lie. Goliath defied armies, yet he fell like a pigeon by a shepherd-boy's sling. Samson tore a lion in pieces with his hands, but a woman laid him low. No man can defy us all, sir! The strong man is sure to find one as strong and more skilful; the cunning man one as adroit and stronger than himself. Be advised then, do not trample upon one of my people. Na-

tions and men that oppress us do not thrive. Let me have to bless you. An old man's blessing is gold. See these grey hairs: my sorrows have been as many as they. His share of the curse that is upon his tribe has fallen upon Isaac Levi." Then, stretching out his hands with a slight but touching gesture, he said, "I have been driven to and fro like a leaf these many years, and now I long for rest. Let me rest in my little tent, till I rest for ever. Oh! let me die, where those I loved have died, and there let me be buried."

Age, sorrow, and eloquence pleaded in vain, for they were wasted on the rocks of rocks, a strong will and a vulgar soul. But indeed the whole thing was like epic poetry wrestling with the "Limerick Chronicle," or "Tuam Gazette."

I am almost ashamed to give the respectable western brute's answer.

"What! you quote Scripture, eh? I thought you did not believe in that. Hear t'other side. Abraham and Lot couldn't live in the same place, because they both kept sheep, and we can't, because we fleece 'em. So Abraham gave Lot warning as I give it you. And as for dying on my premises, if you like to hang yourself before next Lady-day I give you leave, but after Lady-day no more Jewish dogs shall die in my house nor be buried for manure in my garden."

Black lightning poured from the old Jew's eyes, and his pent-up wrath burst out like lava from an angry mountain.

"Irreverent cur! do you rail on the afflicted of Heaven? The founder of your creed would abhor you, for he, they say, was pitiful. I spit upon ye, and I curse ye. Be accursed!!" And flinging up his hands like St. Paul at Lystra he rose to double his height, and towered at his insulter with a sudden Eastern fury that for a moment shook even the iron Meadows. "Be accursed!!" he yelled again. "Whatever is the secret wish of your black heart Heaven look on my grey hairs that you have insulted, and wither that wish. Ah! ha!" he screamed, "you wince. All men have secret wishes — Heaven fight against yours. May all the good luck you have be wormwood for want of that — that — that — that. May you be near it, close to it,

upon it, pant for it, and lose it; may it sport, and smile, and laugh, and play with you, till Gehenna burns your soul upon earth."

The old man's fiery forked tongue darted so keen and true to some sore in his adversary's heart, that he in turn lost his habitual self-command.

White and black with passion he wheeled round on Isaac with a fierce snarl, and lifting his stick discharged a furious blow at his head.

Fortunately for Isaac wood encountered leather instead of grey hairs.

Attracted by the raised voices, and unseen in their frenzy by either of these antagonists, young George Fielding had drawn near them. He had, luckily, a stout pig-whip in his hand, and by an adroit turn of his muscular wrist he parried a blow that would have stopped the old Jew's eloquence perhaps for ever. As it was, the corn-factor's stick cut like a razor through the air, and made a most musical whirr within a foot of the Jew's ear: the basilisk look of venom and vengeance he instantly shot back amounted to a stab.

"Not if I know it," said George. And he stood cool and erect with a calm manly air of defiance between the two belligerents. While the stick and the whip still remained in contact Meadows glared at Isaac's champion with surprise and wrath, and a sort of half fear half wonder that this of all men in the world should be the one to cross weapons with and thwart him. "You are joking, Master Meadows," said George coolly. "Why the man is twice your age, and nothing in his hand but his fist. Who are ye, old man, and what d'ye want? It's you for cursing, any way."

"He insults me," cried Meadows, "because I won't have him for a tenant against my will. Who is he? A villainous old Jew."

"Yes, young man," said the other, sadly, "I am Isaac Levi, a Jew. And what is your religion" (he turned upon Meadows)? "It never came out of Judea in any name or shape. D'ye call yourself a heathen? Ye lie, ye cur; the heathen were

not without starlight from heaven; they respected sorrow and grey hairs."

"You shall smart for this: I'll show you what my religion is," said Meadows inadvertent with passion, and the corn-factor's fingers grasped his stick convulsively.

"Don't you be so aggravating old man," said the good-natured George, "and you, Mr. Meadows, should know how to make light of an old man's tongue; why it's like a woman's, it's all he has got to hit with; leastways you mustn't lift hand to him on my premises, or you will have to settle with me first; and I don't think that would suit your book or any man's for a mile or two round about Farnborough," said George with his little Berkshire drawl.

"He!" shrieked Isaac, "he dare not! see! see!" and he pointed nearly into the man's eye, "he doesn't look you in the face. Any soul that has read men from east to west can see lion in your eye, young man, and cowardly wolf in his."

"Lady-day! Lady-day!" snorted Meadows, who was now shaking with suppressed rage.

"Ah!" cried Isaac, and he turned white and quivered in his turn.

"Lady-day!" said George, uneasily, "*con*found Lady-day, and every day of the sort — there, don't you be so spiteful, old man — why if he isn't all of a tremble: — poor old man." He went to his own door, and called "Sarah!"

A stout servant girl answered the summons.

"Take the old man in, and give him whatever is going, and his mug and pipe," then he whispered her, "and don't go lumping the chine down under his nose now."

"I thank you young man," faltered Isaac, "I must not eat with you, but I will go in and rest my limbs which fail me; and compose myself: for passion is unseemly at my years."

Arrived at the door, he suddenly paused, and looking upward said —

"Peace be under this roof, and comfort and love follow me into this dwelling."

"Thank ye kindly," said young Fielding a little surprised

and touched by this — "How old are you, daddy, if you please?" added he respectfully.

"My son, I am threescore years and ten — a man of years and grief — grief for myself, grief still more for my nation and city. Men that are men pity us; men that are dogs have insulted us in all ages."

"Well," said the good-natured young man soothingly — "don't you vex yourself any more about it. Now you go in, and forget all your trouble awhile, please God, by my fireside, my poor old man."

Isaac turned, the water came to his eyes at this after being insulted so; a little struggle took place in him, but nature conquered prejudice and certain rubbish he called religion. He held out his hand like the king of all Asia; George grasped it like an Englishman.

"Isaac Levi is your friend," and the expression of the man's whole face and body showed these words carried with them a meaning unknown in good society.

He entered the house, and young Fielding stood watching him with a natural curiosity.

Now Isaac Levi knew nothing about the corn-factor's plans. When at one and the same moment he grasped George's hand, and darted a long, lingering glance of demoniacal hatred on Meadows, he coupled two sentiments by pure chance: — and Meadows knew this: but still it struck Meadows as singular and ominous.

When, with the best of motives one is on a wolf's errand, it is not nice to hear an hyena say to the shepherd's dog, "I am your friend," and see him contemporaneously shoot the eye of a rattlesnake at oneself.

The misgiving however was but momentary; Meadows respected his own motives, and felt his own power; an old Jew's wild fury could not shake his confidence.

He muttered, "One more down to your account, George Fielding," and left the young man watching Isaac's retreating form.

George, who didn't know he was gone, said —

"Old man's words seem to knock against my bosom, Mr. Meadows — gone — eh? — that man," thought George Fielding, "has everybody's good word, parson's and all — who'd think he'd lift his hand, leastways his stick it was and that's worse, against a man of threescore and upwards — Ugh!" thought George Fielding, yeoman of the midland counties — and unaffected wonder mingled with his disgust.

His reverie was broken by William Fielding just ridden in from Farnborough.

"Better late than never," said the elder brother, impatiently.

"Couldn't get away sooner George; here's the money for the sheep, 13*l.* 10*s.*; no offer for the cow, Jem is driving her home."

"Well, but the money — the 80*l.*, Will?"

William looked sulkily down.

"I haven't got it, George! — there's your draft again, the bank wouldn't take it."

A keen pang shot across George's face, as much for the affront as the disappointment.

"They wouldn't take it?" gasped he. "Ay, Will, our credit is down, the whole town knows our rent is overdue. I suppose you know money *must* be got some way."

"Any way is better than threshing out new wheat at such a price," said William sullenly. "Ask a loan of a neighbour."

"Oh, Will," appealed George, "to ask a loan of a neighbour, and be denied — it is bitterer than death. *You* can do it."

"I! — am I master here?" retorted the younger. "The farm is not farmed my way, nor ever was. No! — give me the plough-handle and I'll cut the furrow George."

"No doubt! no doubt!" said the other, very sharply, "you'd like to draw the land dry with potato crops, and have fourscore hogs snoring in the farmyard: that's your idea of a farm. Oh! I know you want to be elder brother. Well, I tell'ee what do: you kill me first, Bill Fielding, and then you will be elder brother, and not afore."

Here was a pretty little burst of temper! We have all our sore part.

"So be it, George!" replied William, "you got us into the mud, elder brother, you get us out of the mire!"

George subdued his tone directly.

"Who shall I ask?" said he, as one addressing a bosom counsellor.

"Uncle Merton, or — or — Mr. Meadows the cornfactor; he lends money at times to friends. It would not be much to either of them."

"Show my empty pockets to Susanna's father! Oh Will! how can you be so cruel?"

"Meadows, then."

"No use for me, I've just offended him a bit; besides he's a man that never knew trouble or ill luck in his life; they are like flints, all that sort."

"Well, look here, I'm pretty well with Meadows. I'll ask him if you will try uncle; the first that meets his man to begin."

"That sounds fair," said George, "but I can't — well — yes," said he, suddenly changing his mind. "I agree," said he, with simple cunning, and lowered his eyes; but suddenly raising them, he said cheerfully, "Why you're in luck, Bill, here's your man," and he shot like an arrow into his own kitchen.

"Confound it," said the other fairly caught.

Meadows, it is to be observed, was wandering about the premises until such time as Robinson should return; and whilst the brothers were arguing, he had been in the barn, and finding old Merton there had worked still higher that prudent man's determination to break off matters between his daughter and the farmer of "The Grove."

After the usual salutations William Fielding, sore against the grain, began —

"I did not know you were here, sir! I want to speak to you."

"I am at your service, Mr. Willum."

"Well, sir. George and I are a little short just at present;

it is only for a time, and George says, he should take it very kind, if you would lend us a hundred pound, just to help us over the stile."

"Why, Mr. Willum," replied Meadows, "I should be delighted, and if you had only asked me yesterday, I could have done it as easy as stand here; but my business drinks a deal of money, Mr. Willum, and I laid out all my loose cash yesterday; but, of course, it is of no consequence, — another time — good morning Mr. Willum."

Away sauntered Meadows, leaving William planted there, as the French say.

George ran out of the kitchen.

"Well?"

"He says he has got no money loose."

"He is a liar! he paid 1,500 *l.* into the bank yesterday, and you knew it; didn't you tell him so?"

"No; what use? A man that lies to avoid lending won't be driven to lend."

"You don't play fair," retorted George. "You could have got it from Meadows, if you had a mindt; but you want to drive your poor brother against his sweetheart's father; you are false, my lad."

"You are the only man that ever said so; and you durstn't say it, if you weren't my brother."

"If it wasn't for that, I'd say a deal more."

"Well, show your high stomach to uncle Merton, for there he is. Hy! — uncle!" cried William to Merton, who turned instantly and came towards them. "George wants to speak to you," said William, and shot like a cross-bow bolt behind the house.

"That is lucky," said Merton, "for I want to speak to you."

"Who would have thought of his being about?" muttered George.

While George was calling up his courage and wits to open his subject, Mr. Merton, who had no such difficulties, was beforehand with him.

"You are threshing out new wheat?" said Merton, gravely.

"Yes," answered George, looking down.

"That is a bad look out; a farmer has no business to go to his barn-door for his rent."

"Where is he to go then? to the church-door, and ask for a miracle?"

"No; to his ship-fold, to be sure."

"Ay! you can; you have got grass and water and everything to hand."

"And so must you young man, or you'll never be a farmer. Now, George I must speak to you seriously," (George winced.) "You are a fine lad, and I like you very well, but I love my own daughter better."

"So do I!" said George simply.

"And I must look out for her," resumed Merton. "I have seen a pretty while how things are going here, and if she marries you she will have to keep you instead of you her.

"Heaven forbid! Matters are not so bad as that, uncle."

"You are too much of a man, I hope," continued Merton, "to eat a woman's bread; and if you are not, I am man enough to keep the girl from it."

"These are hard words to bear," gasped George. "So near my own house, old man."

"Well, plain speaking is best when the mind is made up," was the reply.

"Is this from Susanna, as well as you?" said George, with a trembling lip, and scarce able to utter the words.

"Susan is an obedient daughter. What I say she'll stand to; and I hope you know better than to tempt her to disobey me; you wouldn't succeed."

"Enough said," answered George very sternly. "Enough said, old man; I've no need to tempt any girl."

"Good morning, George!" and away stumped Merton.

"Good morning, uncle! (ungrateful old thief)."

"William," cried he, to his brother, who came the next minute to hear the news, "our mother took him out of the dirt

— I have heard her say as much — or he'd not have a ship-fold to brag of. Oh! my heart — oh! Will! —"

"Well, will he lend the money?"

"I never asked him."

"You never asked him!" cried William.

"Bill, he began upon me in a moment," said George, looking appealingly into his brother's face; "he sees we are going down hill, and he as good as bade me think no more of Susan."

"Well," said the other, harshly, "it was your business to own the truth, and ask him help us over the stile — he's our own blood."

"You want to let me down lower than I would let that Carlo dog of yours. You're no brother of mine," retorted George fiercely and bitterly.

"A bargain is a bargain," replied the other sullenly. "I asked Meadows, and he said No. You fell talking with uncle about Susan, and never put the question to him at all. Who is the false one, eh?"

"If you call me false, I'll knock your ugly head off, sulky Bill."

"You're false, and a fool into the bargain, bragging George!"

"What, you will have it then?"

"If you can give it me."

"Well, if it is to be," said George, "I'll give you something to put you on your mettle: the best man shall farm 'The Grove,' and the other shall be a servant on it, or go elsewhere, for I am sick of this."

"And so am I!" cried William, hastily; "and have been any time this two years."

They tucked up their sleeves a little, shook hands, and then retired each one step, and began to fight.

And how came these two honest men to forget that the blood they proposed to shed was thicker than water? Was it the farm, money, agricultural dissension, temper? They would have told you it was, and perhaps thought it was. It was Susanna Merton!

The secret subtle influence of jealousy had long been fermenting, and now it exploded in this way and under this disguise.

Ah! William Fielding, and all of you, "Beware of jealousy" — cursed jealousy! it is the sultan of all the passions, and the Tartar chief of all the crimes. Other passions affect the character; this changes, and, if good, always reverses it! Mind that, reverses it! turns honest men to snakes, and doves to vultures. Horrible unnatural mixture of Love with Hate — you poison the whole mental constitution — you bandage the judgment — you crush the sense of right and wrong — you steel the bowels of compassion — you madden the brain — you corrupt the heart — you damn the soul.

The Fieldings, then, shook hands mechanically, and receding each a step began to spar.

Each of these farmers fancied himself slightly the best man; but they both knew they had an antagonist with whom it would not do to make the least mistake.

They therefore sparred and feinted with wary eye before they ventured to close; George however, the more impetuous, was preparing to come to closer quarters when all of a sudden to the other's surprise he dropped his hands by his sides, and turned the other way with a face anything but warlike, fear being now the prominent expression.

William followed the direction of his eye, and then William partook his brother's uneasiness; however, he put his hands in his pockets, and began to saunter about, in a circumference of three yards, to get up a would-be-careless whistle, while George's hands became dreadfully in his way, so he washed them in the air.

Whilst they were employed in this peaceful pantomime a beautiful young woman glided rapidly between the brothers.

Her first words renewed their uneasiness.

"What is this?" cried she, haughtily, and she looked from one to the other like a queen rebuking her subjects.

George looked at William — William had nothing ready.

So George said, with some hesitation, but in a mellifluous

voice, "William was showing me — a trick — he learned at the fair — that is all, Susan."

"That is a falsehood, George," replied the lady, "the first you ever told me" — (George coloured) — "you were fighting, you two boys — I saw your eyes flash!"

The rueful wink exchanged by the combatants at this stroke of sagacity was truly delicious.

"Oh fie! oh fie! brothers by one mother fighting — in a Christian land — within a stone's throw of a church, where brotherly love is preached as a debt we owe to strangers, let alone our own blood."

"Yes! it is a sin, Susan," said William, his conscience suddenly illuminated. "So I ask *your* pardon, Susanna."

"Oh! it wasn't your fault, I'll be bound," was the gracious reply. "What a ruffian you must be George, to shed your brother's blood."

"La! Susan," said George with a doleful whine, "I wasn't going to shed the beggar's blood. I was only going to give him a hiding for his impudence."

"Or take one for your own," replied William coolly.

"That is more likely," said Susan. "George, take William's hand; take it this instant, I say," cried she with an air imperative and impatient.

"Well, why not? don't you go in a passion Susan, about nothing," said George, coaxingly.

They took hands; she made them hold one another by the hand, which they did with both their heads hanging down. "Whilst I speak a word to you two," said Susan Merton.

"You ought both to go on your knees, and thank Providence that sent me here to prevent so great a crime; and as for you, your character must change greatly, George Fielding, before I trust myself to live in a house of yours."

"Is all the blame to fall on my head?" said George, letting go William's hand with no great apparent reluctance.

"Of course it is! William is a quiet lad, that quarrels with nobody; you are always quarrelling; you thrashed our carter last Candlemas."

"He spoke saucy words about you."

Susan, smiling inwardly, made her face as repulsive outside as lay in her power.

"I don't believe it," said Susan; "your time was come round to fight and be a ruffian, and so it was to-day, no doubt."

"Ah!" said George, sorrowfully, "it is always poor George that does all the wrong."

"Oh!" replied the lady, an arch smile playing for a moment about her lips, "I could scold William, too, if you think I am as much inter*es*ted in his conduct and behaviour as in yours."

"No, no!" cried George, brightening up, "don't think to scold anybody but me Susan; and William," said he suddenly and frankly, "I ask your pardon."

"No more about it, George, if you please," answered William in his dogged way.

"Susan," said George, "you don't know all I have to bear. My heart is sore, Susan dear. Uncle twitted me not an hour ago with my ill luck, and almost bade me to speak to you no more, leastways as my sweetheart; and that was why when William came at me on the top of such a blow, it was more than I could bear; and Susan — Susan — uncle said you would stand to whatever he said."

"George," said Susan gently, "I am very sorry my father was so unkind."

"Thank ye kindly, Susan; that is the first drop of dew that has fallen on me to-day."

"But obedience to parents," continued Susan interrogating as it were her conscience "is a great duty. I *hope* I shall never disobey my father," faltered she.

"Oh!" answered the goose George hastily, "I don't want any girl to be kind to me that does not love me; I am so unlucky, it would not be worth her while you know."

At this Susan answered still more sharply, "No, I don't think it would be worth any woman s while, till your character and temper undergo a change."

George never answered a word but went and leaned his

head upon the side of a cart that stood half in and half out of a shed close by.

At this juncture a gay personage joined the party. He had a ball waistcoat, an alarming tie, a shooting jacket, wet muddy trowsers and shoes, and an empty basket on his back.

He joined our group, just as George was saying to himself very sadly, "I am in everybody's way here" — and he attacked him directly.

"Everybody is in this country."

The reader is to understand that this Robinson was last from California; and California had made such an impression upon him, that he turned the conversation that way oftener than a well-regulated understanding recurs to any one topic, except perhaps religion.

He was always pestering George to go to California with him, and it must be owned that on this one occasion George had given him a fair handle.

"Come out of it," continued Robinson, "and make your fortune."

"You did not make yours there," said Susan sharply.

"I beg your pardon, miss. I made it, or how could I have spent it?"

"No doubt," said William: "what comes by the wind goes by the water."

"Alluding to the dust?" inquired the Cockney.

"Gold dust especially," retorted Susan Merton.

Robinson laughed. "The ladies are sharp, even in Berkshire," said he.

Mr. Robinson then proceeded to disabuse their minds about the facility of gold.

"A crop of gold," said he, "does not come by the wind any more than a crop of corn; it comes by harder digging than your potatoes ever saw, and harder work than you ever did — oxen and horses perspire for you, Fielding No. 2."

"Did you ever see a horse or an ox mow an acre of grass or barley?" retorted William drily.

"Don't brag," replied the other; "they'll eat all you can mow and never say a word about it."

This repartee was so suited to the rustic idea of wit, that Robinson's antagonists laughed heartily, except George.

"What is the matter with him?" said Robinson *sotto voce*, indicating George.

"Oh! he is cross, never mind him," replied Susan ostentatiously loud. George winced, but never spoke back to her.

Robinson then proceeded to disabuse the rural mind of the notion that gold is to be got without hard toil even in California; he told them how the miners' shirts were wet through and through in the struggle for gold; he told them how the little boys demanded a dollar a piece for washing these same garments; and how the miners to escape this extortion sent their linen to China in ships on Monday morning, and China sent them back on Saturday, only it was Saturday six weeks.

Next Mr. Robinson proceeded to draw a parallel between England and various nations on the other side of the Atlantic, not at all complimentary to his island home; about all, he was eloquent on the superior dignity of labour in new countries.

"I heard one of your clodhoppers say the other day, 'The squire is a good gentleman, he often *gives me a day's work*.' Now I should think it was the clodhopper gave the gentleman the day's work, and the gentleman gave him a shilling for it — and made five by it."

William Fielding scratched his head: this was a new view of things to him, but there seemed to be something in it.

"Ay! rake that into your upper soil," cried our republican orator; then collecting into one his scattered items of argument, he invited his friend George to take his muscle, pluck, wind, back-bone, and self, out of this miserable country, and come where the best man has a chance to win.

"Come, George," he cried, "England is the spot if you happen to be married to a Duke's daughter, and got fifty thousand a year and three houses.

"*And* a coach.

"*And* a brougham.

"*And* a curricle.

"*And* ten brace of pointers.

"*And* a telescope so big the stars must move to it, instead of it to the stars.

"*And* no end of pretty housemaids.

"*And* a butler with a poultice round his neck and whiskers like a mop-head.

"*And* a silver tub full of rose-water to sit in and read the Morning Post.

"*And* a green-house full of peaches — and green peas all the year round.

"*And* a pew in the church warmed with biling eau de Cologne.

"*And* a carpet a foot thick.

"*And* a piano-forte in every blessed room in the house. — But this island is the dead sea to a poor man."

He then, diverging from the rhetorical to the metropolitan style, proposed to his friend "to open one eye: that will show you this hole you are in is all poor hungry arable ground. You know you can't work it to a profit." (George winced.) "No! steal, borrow, or beg 500*l*. Carry out a cargo of pea-jackets and fourpenny bits to swap for gold-dust, a few tools, a stout heart, and a light pair of — 'Oh no, we never mention them, their name is never heard' — and we'll soon fill both pockets with the shiney in California."

All this Mr. Robinson delivered with a volubility to which Berkshire had hitherto been a stranger.

"A crust of bread in England before buffalo beef in California," was George's reply; but it was not given in that assured tone with which he would have laughed at Robinson's eloquence a week ago.

"I could not live with all those thieves and ruffians that are settled down there like crows on a dead horse; but I thank you kindly my lad all the same," said the tender-hearted young man.

"Strange," thought he, "that so many should sing me the same tune," and he fell back into his reverie.

Here they were all summoned to dinner, with a dash of asperity, by Sarah the stout farm servant.

Susan lingered an instant to speak to George: she chose an unfortunate topic. She warned him once more against Mr. Robinson.

"My father says that he has no business nor trade, and he is not a gentleman, in spite of his red and green cravat, so he must be a rogue of some sort."

"Shall I tell you his greatest fault?" was the bitter reply. "He is my friend; he is the only creature that has spoken kind words to me to-day. Oh! I saw how cross you looked at him."

Susan's eyes flashed, and the colour rose in her cheek, and the water in her eyes.

"You are a fool, George," said she; "you don't know how to read a woman, nor her looks, nor her words either."

And Susan was very angry and disdainful, and did not speak to George all dinner-time.

As for poor George he followed her into the house with a heart both sick and heavy.

This Berkshire farmer had a proud and sensitive nature under a homely crust.

Old Merton's words had been iron passing through his soul, and besides he felt as if everything was turning cold and slippery and gliding from his hand. He shivered with vague fears, and wished the sun would set at one o'clock and the sorrowful day come to an end.

CHAPTER II.

THE meal passed almost in silence; Robinson was too hungry to say a word, and a weight hung upon George and Susan.

As they were about to rise, William observed two men in the farm-yard who were strangers to him — the men seemed to be inspecting the hogs. It struck him as rather cool; but apparently the pig is an animal which to be prized needs but to be

known, for all connoisseurs of him are also enthusiastic amateurs.

When I say the pig I mean the four-legged one.

William Fielding, partly from curiosity to hear these strangers' remarks, partly hoping to find customers in them, strolled in the farm-yard before his companions rose from the table.

The others looking carelessly out of the window saw William join the two men and enter into conversation with them; but their attention was almost immediately diverted from that group by the entrance of Meadows. He came in radiant; his face was a remarkable contrast to the rest of the party.

Susan could not help noticing it.

"Why, Mr. Meadows," cried she, "you look as bright as a May morning; it is quite refreshing to see you; we are all rather down here this morning."

Meadows said nothing, and did not seem at his ease under this remark.

George rose from the table; so did Susan; Robinson merely pushed back his chair, and gave a comfortable little sigh, but the next moment he cried "Hallo!"

They looked up, and there was William's face close against the window.

William's face was remarkably pale, and first he tried to attract George's attention without speaking, but finding himself observed by the whole party, he spoke out.

"George, will you speak a word?" said he.

George rose and went out; but Susan's curiosity was wakened, and she followed him accompanied by Meadows.

"None but you, George," said William, with a voice half stern, half quivering.

George looked at his brother.

"Out with it," cried he, "it is some deadly ill-luck; I have felt it coming all day, but out with it; what can't I bear after the words I have borne this morning?"

William hung his head.

"George, there is a distress upon the farm for the rent."

George did not speak at first, he literally staggered under these words; his proud spirit writhed in his countenance, and with a groan, he turned his back abruptly upon them all, and hid his face against the corner of his own house, the cold hard bricks.

Meadows by strong self-command contrived not to move a muscle of his face.

Up to this day and hour, Susan Merton had always seemed cool, compared with her lover; she used to treat him a little *de haut en bas.*

But when she saw his shame and despair, she was much distressed.

"George, George!" she cried, "don't do so: can nothing be done? Where is my father? — they told me he was here: he is rich, he shall help you." She darted from them in search of Merton; ere she could turn the angle of the house he met her.

"You had better go home my girl," said he gravely.

"Oh! no! no! I have been too unkind to George already," and she turned towards him like a pitying angel with hands extended as if they would bring balm to a hurt soul.

Meadows left chuckling and was red and white by turns.

Merton was one of those friends one may make sure of finding in adversity.

"There," cried he, "George, I told you how it would end."

George wheeled round on him like lightning.

"What, do you come here to insult over me? I must be a long way lower than I am, before I shall be as low as you were when my mother took you up and made a man of you."

"George, George!" cried Susan in dismay; "stop, for pity's sake, before you say words that will separate us for ever. Father," cried the peace-making angel, "how can you push poor George so hard and him in trouble! and we have all been too unkind to him to-day."

Ere either could answer, there was happily another interruption. A smart servant in livery walked up to them with a letter. With the instinctive feeling of class they all endeavoured

to conceal their agitation from the gentleman's servant. He handed George the note, and saying, "I was to wait for an answer, Farmer Fielding," sauntered towards the farm-stables.

"From Mr. Winchester," said George, after a long and careful inspection of the outside.

In the country it is a point of honour to find out the writer of a letter by the direction not the signature.

"The Honorable Francis Winchester! What does he write to you?" cried Merton, in a tone of great surprise. This, too, was not lost on George.

Human nature is human nature: he was not sorry to be able to read a gentleman's letter in the face of one who had bitterly reproached him, and of others who had seen him mortified and struck down.

"Seems so," said George, drily and with a glance of defiance; and he read out the letter.

"George Fielding, my fine fellow, think of it again: I have two berths in the ship that sails from Southampton to-morrow, you will have every comfort on the voyage, a great point. I will do what I said for you (he promised me five hundred sheep and a run). I must have an honest man, and where can I find as honest a man as George Fielding?" — ("Thank you, Mr. Winchester, George Fielding thanks you, sir.") And there was something noble and simple in the way the young farmer drew himself up, and looked fearlessly in all his companions' eyes.

"You saved my life — I can do nothing for you here — and you are doing no good at 'The Grove' — every body says so" — ("everybody says so!" — and George Fielding winced at the words.)

"And it really pains me my brave fellow to go without you where I know I could put you on the way of fortune: my heart is pretty stout; but home is home; and be assured that I wait with some anxiety, to know, whether my eyes are to look on nothing but water for the next four months, or are to be cheered by the sight of something from home, the face of a thoroughbred English yeoman, and — a friend — and — and —"

Poor George could read no more, the kind words coming after his affronts and troubles brought his heart to his mouth.

Susan took the letter from him, and read out —

"And an upright, downright honest man" — "AND SO YOU ARE, GEORGE!" cried she, warmly, drawing to George's side, and darting glances of defiance vaguely around. Then she continued to read —

"If the answer is favourable, a word is enough: meet me at 'The Crown,' in Newborough to-night, and we will go up to town by the mail train."

"The answer is, Yes," said George to the servant, who was at some distance.

Susan, bending over the letter, heard, but could not realize the word, but the servant now came nearer: George said to him, "Tell your master, Yes."

"Yes? George!" cried Susan, "what do you mean by yes? It is about going to Australia."

"The answer is, yes," said George.

The servant went away with the answer.

The others remained motionless.

"This nobleman's son respects me if worse folk don't: but it is not the great bloodhounds and greyhounds that bark at misfortune's heels, it is only the village curs when all is done: this is my path. I'll pack up my things and go." And he did not look at Susan, or any of them, but went into the house like a man walking in his sleep.

There was a stupefied pause.

Then Susan gave a cry like a wounded deer.

"Father! what have you done?"

Merton himself had been staggered, but he replied stoutly —

"No more than my duty, girl, and I hope you will do no less than yours."

At this moment, Robinson threw up the window and jumped out into the yard.

Meadows under stronger interests had forgotten Robinson; but now at sight of him he looked round, and catching the eye

of a man who was peering over the farm-yard wall, made him a signal.

"What is the matter?" cried Robinson.

"George is going to Australia," replied Merton, coldly.

"Australia!" roared Robinson — "Au-stralia! he's mad, who ever goes there unless they are forced? — He shan't go there! — I would'nt go there if my passage was paid, and a new suit of clothes given me, and the governor's gig to take me ashore to a mansion provided for my reception, fires lighted, beds aired, and pipes laid across upon the table."

As Robinson concluded this tirade the policeman and constable, who had crept round the angle of the farm-house, came one on each side, put each a hand on one of his elbows and — took him!

He looked first down at their hands in turn, then up at their faces in turn, and when he saw the metropolitan's face a look of simple disgust diffused itself over his whole countenance.

"Ugh!!!" interjected Robinson.

"Ay!" replied the policeman, while putting handcuffs on him — "To Australia you'll go for all that, Tom Lyon, alias Scott, alias Robinson, and you'll have a new suit of clothes, mostly one colour, and voyage paid, and a large house ashore waiting for you and the governor's gig will come alongside for you provided they can't find the convict's barge," and the official was pleased with himself and his wit and allowed it to appear.

But by this time Robinson was on his balance again. "Gentlemen!" answered he with cold dignity "What am I to understand by this violence from persons to whom I am an utter stranger?" and he might have sat for the picture of injured innocence. "I am not acquainted with you, sir," added he; "and by the titles you give me it seems you are not acquainted with me."

The police laughed, and took out of this injured man's pocket the stolen notes which Meadows instantly identified.

Then Mr. Robinson started off into another key equally artistical in its way.

"Miss Merton," snuffled he, "appearances are against me, but mark my words, my innocence will emerge all the brighter for this temporary cloud."

Susan Merton ran in doors, saying, "Oh! I must tell George." She was not sorry of an excuse to be by George's side, and remind him by her presence that if home had its thorns it had its rose-tree too.

News soon spreads; rustic heads were seen peeping over the wall to see the finale of the fine gentleman from "Lunnun:" meantime the constable went to put his horse in a four-wheel chaise destined to convey Robinson to the county gaol.

If the rural population expected to see this worthy discomposed by so sudden a change of fortune, they were soon undeceived.

"Well, Jacobs," said he, with sudden familiarity, "you seem uncommon pleased, and I am content. I would rather have gone to California; but any place is better than England. Laugh those who win. I shall breathe a delicious climate; you will make yourself as happy as a prince, that is to say, miserable, upon fifteen shillings and two colds a week; my sobriety and industry will realize a fortune under a smiling sun: let chaps that never saw the world, and the beautiful countries there are in it, snivel at leaving this island of fogs and rocks and taxes and nobs, the rich man's paradise, the poor man's — I never swear, it's vulgar."

While he was crushing his captors with his eloquence, George and Susan came together from the house; George's face betrayed wonder and something akin to horror: —

"A thief!" cried he. "Have I taken the hand of a thief?"

"It is a business like any other," said Robinson deprecatingly.

"If you have no shame I have; I long to be gone now."

"George!" whined the culprit, who, strange to say, had become attached to the honest young farmer. "Did ever I take tithe of you? You have got a silver caudle cup, a heavenly old coffee-pot, no end of spoons double the weight those rogues the silversmiths make them now; they are in a box under your bed

in your room," added he looking down: "count them, they are all right; and Miss Merton, your bracelet, the gold one with the cameo: I could have had it a hundred times. Miss Merton, ask him to shake hands with me at parting. I am so fond of him and perhaps I shall never see him again."

"Shake hands with you?" answered George sternly; "if your hands were loose I doubt I should ram my fist down your throat; but there, you are not worth a thought at such a time, and you are a man in trouble, and I am another. I forgive you, and I pray heaven I may never see your face again."

And Honesty turned his back in Theft's face.

Robinson bit his lips and said nothing, but his eyes glistened; just then a little boy and girl, who had been peering about mighty curious, took courage and approached hand in hand. The girl was the speaker, as a matter of course:

"Farmer Fielding," said she curtsying, a mode of reverence which was instantly copied by the boy, "we are come to see the thief; they say you have caught one — Oh dear!" (and her bright little countenance was overcast,) "I could'nt have told it from a man!"

We don't know all that is in the hearts of the wicked. Robinson was observed to change colour at these silly words.

"Mr. Jacobs," said he, addressing the policeman, "have you authority to put me in the pillory before trial?" He said this coldly and sternly; and then added, "Perhaps you are aware that I am a man, and I might say a brother, for you were a thief you know!" Then changing his tone entirely, "I say, Jacobs," said he, with cheerful briskness, "do you remember cracking the silversmith's shop in Lambeth along with Jem Salisbury and Black George, and —?"

"There the gig is ready," cried Mr. Jacobs; "you come along," and the ex-thief pushed the thief hastily off the premises and drove him away with speed.

George Fielding gave a bitter sigh: this was a fresh mortification. He had for the last two months been defending Robinson against the surmises of the village.

Villages are always concluding there is something wrong about people.

"What does he do?" inquired our village.

"Where does he get his blue coat with brass buttons, his tartan waistcoat and green satin tie with red ends? We admit all this looks like a gentleman: but yet, somehow, a gentleman is a horse of another colour than this Robinson."

George had sometimes laughed at all this, sometimes been very angry, and always stood up stoutly for his friend and lodger.

And now the fools were right and he was wrong: his friend and protégé was handcuffed before his eyes, and carried off to the county gaol amidst the grins and stares of a score of gaping rustics, who would make a fine story of it this evening in both the public-houses; and a hundred voices would echo some such conversational Tristich as this, —

1*st Rustic.* "I tawld un as much, dinn't I now, Jarge?"

2*nd Rustic.* "That ye did Richard, for I heerd ee."

1*st Rustic.* "But, la! bless ye, he don't vally advice, *he* don't."

George Fielding groaned out, "I'm ready to go now — I'm quite ready to go — I am leaving a nest of insults;" and he darted into the house, as much to escape the people's eyes as to finish his slight preparations for so great a journey.

Two men were left alone; sulky William and respectable Meadows. Both these men's eyes followed George into the house, and each had a strong emotion they were bent on concealing, and did conceal from each other; but was it concealed from all the world?

The farm-house had two rooms looking upon the spot where most of our tale has passed.

The smaller one of these was a little state parlour, seldom used by the family. Here on a table was a grand old folio Bible; the names, births, and deaths of a century of Fieldings appeared in rusty ink and various handwritings upon its fly-leaf.

Framed on the walls were the first savage attempts of woman at worsted-work in these islands. There were two moral commonplaces, and there was the forbidden fruit-tree, whose branches diverged, at set distances like the radii of a circle,

from its stem, a perpendicular line; exactly at the end of each branch hung one forbidden fruit — pre-Raphaelite worsted-work.

There were also two prints of more modern date, one agricultural, one manufactoral.

No. 1 was a great show of farming implements at Doncaster.

No. 2 showed how one day in the history of man and of mutton a sheep was sheared, her wool washed, teased, carded &c., and the cloth *'d and *'d and *'d and *'d, and a coat shaped and sewed and buttoned upon a goose, whose preparations for inebriating the performers and spectators of his feat appeared in a prominent part of the picture.

The window of this sunny little room was open, and on the sill was a row of flower-pots, from which a sweet fresh smell crept with the passing air into the chamber.

Behind these flower-pots for two hours past had crouched — all eye and ear and mind — a keen old man.

To Isaac Levi age had brought vast experience, and had not yet dimmed any one of his senses. More than forty-five years ago he had been brought to see that men seldom act or speak so as to influence the fortunes of others without some motive of their own; and that these motives are seldom the motives they advance; and that their real motives are not always known to themselves, and yet can nearly always be read and weighed by an intelligent bystander.

So for near half a century Isaac Levi had read that marvellous page of nature written on black, white, and red parchments, and called "Man."

One result of his perusal was this, that the heads of human tribes differ far more than their hearts.

The passions and the heart he had found intelligible and much the same from Indus to the Pole.

The people of our tale were like men walking together in a coppice; they had but glimpses of each other's minds; but to Isaac behind his flower-pots they were a little human chart spread out flat before him, and not a region in it he had not travelled and surveyed before to-day: what to others passed for

accident to him was design; he penetrated more than one disguise of manner; and above all his intelligence bored like a centre-bit into the deep heart of his enemy Meadows, and at each turn of the centre-bit his eye flashed, his ear lived, and he crouched patient as a cat, keen as a lynx.

He was forgotten, but not by all.

Meadows, a cautious man, was the one to ask himself "Where is that old heathen and what is he doing?"

To satisfy himself, Meadows had come smoothly to the door of the little apartment, and burst suddenly into it.

There he found the reverend Israelite extended on a little couch, a bandana handkerchief thrown over his face, calmly reposing.

Meadows paused, eyed him keenly, listened to his gentle but audible equable breathing, relieved his mind by shaking his fist at him, and went out.

Thirty seconds later, Isaac *awoke!* spat in the direction of Meadows, and crouched again behind the innocent flowers, patient as a cat, keen as a lynx.

So then; when George was gone in William Fielding and Mr. Meadows both felt a sudden need of being alone; each longed to indulge some feeling he did not care the other should see; so they both turned their faces away from each other and strolled apart.

Isaac Levi caught both faces off their guard, and read the men as by a lightning flash to the bottom line of their hearts.

For two hours he had followed the text, word by word, deed by deed, letter by letter, and now a comment on that text was written in these faces.

That comment said that William was rejoiced at George's departure and ashamed of himself for the feeling.

That Meadows rejoiced still more and was ashamed anybody should know he had the feeling.

Isaac withdrew from his lair, his task was done.

"Those men both love that woman, and this Meadows loves her with all his soul, and she — aha!" and triumph flashed from under his dark brows. But at his age calm is the natural

state of the mind and spirits; he composed himself for the present, and awaited an opportunity to strike his enemy with effect.

The aged man had read Mr. Meadows aright; under that modulated exterior raged as deep a passion as ever shook a strong nature.

For some time he had fought against it.

"She is another man's sweetheart," he had said to himself; "no good will come of courting her." But by degrees the flax bonds of prudence snapped one by one as the flame every now and then darted at them. Meadows began to reason the matter coolly.

"They can never marry, those two. I wish they would marry or break off, to put me out of this torture; but they can't marry, and my sweet Susan is wasting her prime for nothing, for a dream; besides, it is not as if she loved him the way I love her. She is like many a young maid: the first comer gets her promise before she knows her value. They walk together, get spoken of; she settles down into a groove, and so goes on, whether her heart is in it or not; it is habit more than anything."

Then he watched the pair, and observed that Susan's manner to George was cool and off-hand, and that she did not seem to seek opportunities of being alone with him.

Having got so far, he now felt it his duty to think of her interest.

He could not but feel that he was a great match for any farmer's daughter; whereas "poor young Fielding," said he compassionately "is more likely to break as a bachelor than to support a wife and children upon 'The Grove.'"

He next allowed his mind to dwell with some bitterness upon the poor destiny that stood between him and the woman he loved.

"George Fielding! a dull dog, that could be just as happy with any other girl as with my angel. An oaf, so little alive to his prize, that he doesn't even see he has rivals; doesn't see that his brother loves her. Ah! but I see that though, lover's eyes are sharp: doesn't see me, who mean to take her from both these Fieldings — and what harm? It isn't as if their love was like mine. Heaven forbid I should meddle if it was. A few

weeks, and a few mugs of ale would wash her from what little mind either of them have; but I never loved a woman before, and never could look at another after her."

And so by degrees Meadows saw that he was quite justified in his resolve to win Susan Merton, PROVIDED IT WAS DONE FAIRLY.

This resolve taken, all this man's words and actions began to be colored more or less by his secret wishes; and it is not too much to say, that this was the hand, which was gently but adroitly with a touch here and a touch there pushing George Fielding across the Ocean.

You see, a respectable man can do a deal of mischief; more than a rogue could.

A shrug of the shoulders from Meadows had caused the landlord to distrain.

A hint from Meadows had caused Merton to affront George about Susan.

A tone of Meadows had closed the bank cash-box to the Fieldings' bill of exchange, and so on: and now, finding it almost impossible to contain his exultation, for George once in Australia he felt he could soon vanquish Susan's faint preference, the result of habit, he turned off, and went to meet his mare at the gate; the boy had just returned with her.

He put his foot in the stirrup, but ere he mounted, it occurred to him to ask one of the farm-servants whether the old Jew was gone.

"I sin him in the barn just now," was the reply.

Meadows took his foot out of the stirrup.

Never leave an enemy behind you, was one of his rules. "And why does the old heathen stay?" he asked himself; he clenched his teeth, and vowed he would not leave the village till George Fielding was on his way to Australia.

He sent his mare to the "Black Horse," and strolled up the village; then he showed the boy a shilling, and said, "You be sure and run to the public-house and let me know when George Fielding is going to start,—I should like to see the last of him."

This was true!

CHAPTER III.

AND now passed over "The Grove" the heaviest hours it had ever known: hours as weary as they were bitter to George Fielding. "The Grove" was nothing to him now — in mind he was already separated from it; his clothes were ready, he had nothing more to do, and he wished he could fling himself this moment into the ship, and hide his head, and sleep, and forget his grief, until he reached the land whose fat and endless pastures were to make him rich and send him home a fitter match for Susan.

As the moment of parting drew nearer there came to him that tardy consolation which often comes to the honest man then when it can but add to his pangs of regret.

Perhaps no man is good, manly, tender, generous, honest, and unlucky quite in vain; at last, when such a man is leaving all who have been unjust or cold to him, scales fall from their eyes, a sense of his value flashes like lightning across their half empty skulls and tepid hearts, they feel and express some respect and regret, and make him sadder to leave them: so did the neighbours of "The Grove" to young Fielding. Some hands gave him now their first warm pressure, and one or two voices even faltered as they said "God bless thee, lad!"

And now the carter's lad ran in with a message from a farmer at the top of the hill.

"Oh! Master George, Farmer Dodd says if you please he couldn't think to let you walk. You are to go in his gig to Newbury, if you'll walk up as fur as his farm; he's afeard to come down *our* hill, a says, because if *he* did, *his* mare 'ud kick *his* gig into tooth-picks, *he* says. Oh! Master George, *I* be sorry *you* be going," and the boy, who had begun quite cheerfully, ended in a whimper.

"I thank him! Take my bag, boy, and I'll follow in half an hour."

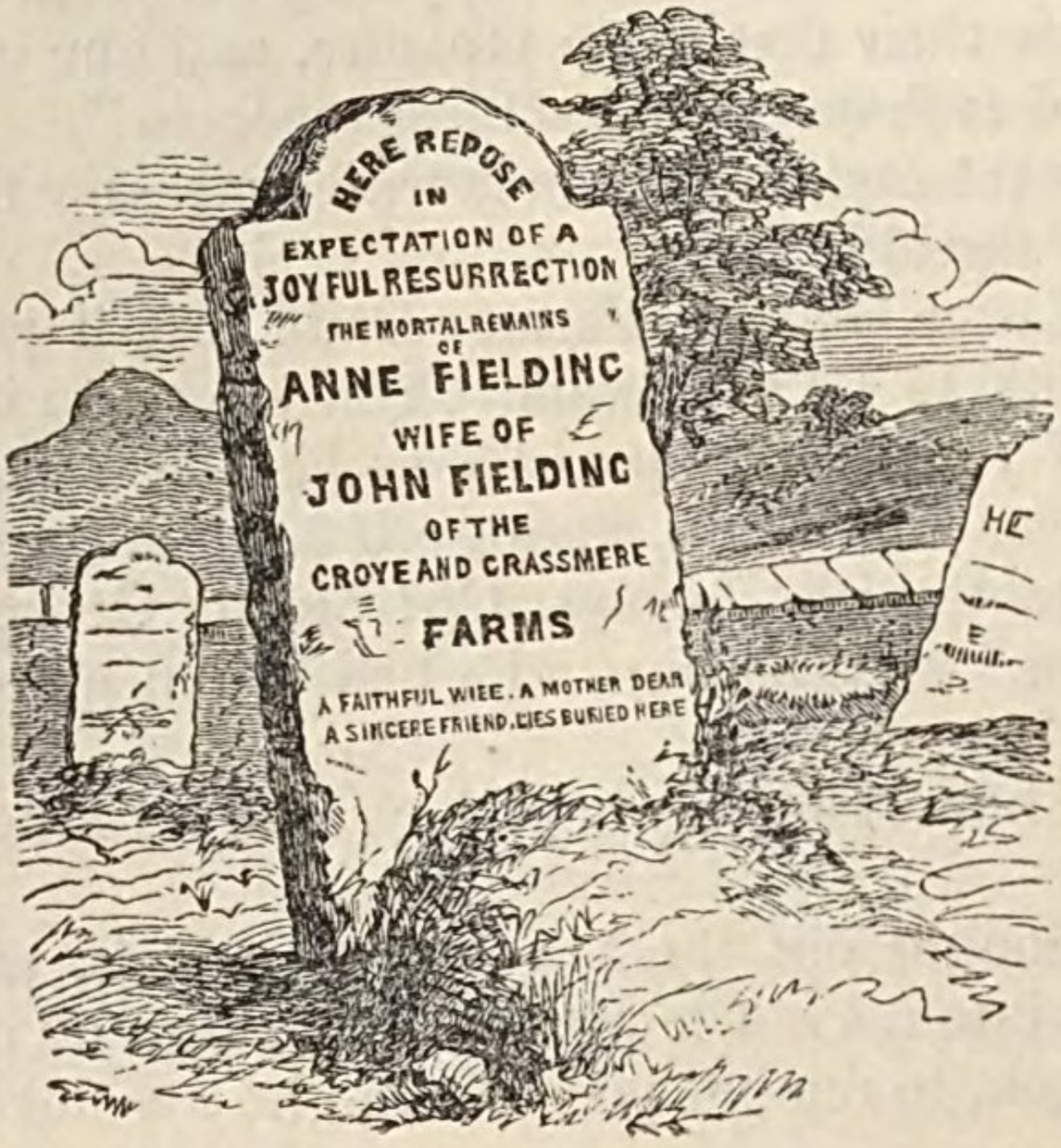
Sarah brought out the bag and opened it, and, weeping bitterly, put into it a bottle with her name on a bit of paper tied round the neck, to remind poor George he was not forgotten at

"The Grove," and then she gave George the key and went sadly in, her apron to her eyes.

And now George fixed his eye on his brother William, and said to him, "William, will you come with me, if *you* please?"

"Ay, George, sure."

They went through the farm-yard side by side; neither spoke, and George took a last look at the ricks, and he paused, and seemed minded to speak, but he did not, he only muttered "not here." Then George led the way out into the paddock, and so into the lane, and very soon they saw the village church; William wondered George did not speak. They passed under the yew-tree into the churchyard; William's heart fluttered. They found the vicar's cow browsing on the graves; William took up a stone — George put out his hand not to let him hurt her, and George turned her gently into the lane — then he stepped carefully among the graves. William followed him, his heart fluttering more and more with vague fears; William knew now where they were going, but what was George going to say to him there? his heart beat faint-like. By and by the brothers came to this —



The grave was between the two men — and silence — both looked down.

George whispered "Good-bye, mother! She never thought we should be parted this way." Then he turned to William, and opened his mouth to say something more to him: doubtless that which he had come to say, but apparently it was too much for him. I think he feared his own resolution. He gasped and with a heavy sigh led the way home. William walked with him, not knowing what to think or do or say; at last he muttered, "I wouldn't go, if my heart was here!"

"I shall go, Will," replied George rather sternly as it seemed.

When they came back to the house, they found several persons collected.

Old Fielding, the young men's grandfather, was there; he had made them wheel him in his great chair out into the sun.

Grandfather Fielding had reached the last stage of human existence. He was 92 years of age. The lines in his face were cordage, his aspect was stony and impassible, and he was all but impervious to passing events; his thin blood had almost ceased to circulate in his extremities; for every drop he had was needed to keep his old heart a beating at all, instead of stopping like a clock that has run down.

Meadows had returned to see George off, and old Merton was also there, and he was one of those whose hearts gave them a bit of a twinge.

"George," said he, "I'm vexed for speaking unkind to you to-day of all days in the year; I didn't think we were to part so soon, lad."

"No more about it, uncle," faltered George; "what does it matter now?"

Susan Merton came out of the house; she had caught her father's conciliatory words; she seemed composed, but pale; she threw her arms round her father's neck.

"Oh! father," said she imploringly, "I thought it was a dream, but he is going, he is really going. — Oh! don't let him go from us, speak him fair father, his spirit is so high."

"Susan!" replied the old farmer, "mayhap the lad thinks me his enemy, but I'm not. My daughter shall not marry a bankrupt farmer, but you bring home a thousand pounds — just one thousand pounds — to show me you are not a fool, and you shall have my daughter and she shall have my blessing."

Meadows exulted.

"Your hand on that, uncle," cried George, with ardour; "your hand on that before heaven and all present."

The old farmer gave George his hand upon it.

"But, father," cried Susan, "your words are sending him away from me."

"Susan!" said George sorrowfully but firmly, "I am to go: but don't forget it is for your sake I leave you my darling Susan — to be a better man for your sake. Uncle since your last words there is no ill will, but (bluntly) I can't speak my heart before you."

"I'll go, George, I'll go; shan't be said my sister's son hadn't leave to speak his mind to letbe who atool,* at such an a time."

Merton turned to leave them, but ere he had taken two steps a most unlooked-for interruption chained him to the spot. An old man, with a long beard and a glittering eye, was amongst them before they were aware of him; he fixed his eye upon Meadows, and spoke a single word — but that word fell like a sledge-hammer.

"No!!" said Isaac Levi in the midst.

"No!!" repeated he to John Meadows.

Meadows understood perfectly what "No" meant; a veto upon all his plans, hopes, and wishes.

"Young man," said Isaac to George, "you shall not wander forth from the home of your fathers. These old eyes see deeper than yours (and he sent an eye-stab at Meadows); you are honest — all men say so — I will lend you the money for your rent, and one who loves you (and he gave another eye-stab at Meadows) will bless me."

* Let be who it will. Cui libet.

"Oh! yes, I bless you," cried Susan innocently.

The late exulting Meadows was benumbed at this.

"Surely heaven sends you to me," cried Susan. "It is Mr. Levi of Farnborough."

Here was a diversion: Meadows cursed the intruder, and his own evil star that had raised him up so malignant an enemy.

"All my web undone in a moment," thought he, and despair began to take possession of him.

Susan on the other hand was all joy and hope; William more or less despondent.

The old Jew glanced from one to another, and them all, and enjoyed his triumph.

But when his eye returned to George Fielding he met with something he had not reckoned upon.

The young man showed no joy, no emotion. He stood immoveable, like a statue of a man, and, when he opened his lips, it was like a statue speaking with its marble mouth.

"No! Susan. No! old man. I *am* honest, though I 'm poor — and proud, though you have seen me put to shame near my own homestead more than once to-day. To borrow without a chance of paying is next door to stealing; and I should never pay you. My eyes are opened in spite of my heart. I can't farm 'The Grove' with no grass, and wheat at forty shillings. I 've tried all I know, and I can't do it. Will there is dying to try, and he shall try, and may heaven speed his plough better than it has poor George's."

"I am not thinking of the farm now George," said William. "I 'm thinking of when we were boys, and used to play marbles — together — upon the tombstones." And he faltered a little.

"Mr. Levi! seems you have a kindness for me: show it to my brother when I 'm away, if you *will* be so good."

"Hum?" said Isaac doubtfully. "I care not to see your stout young heart give way, as it will. Ah, me! I can pity the wanderer from home. I will speak a word with you, and then I will go home."

He drew George aside, and made him a secret communication.

Merton called Susan to him, and made her promise to be prudent, then he shook hands with George, and went away.

Now Meadows, from the direction of Isaac's glance, and a certain half-surprised half-contemptuous look that stole over George's face, suspected that his enemy, whose sagacity he could no longer doubt, was warning George against him.

This made him feel very uneasy where he was, and this respectable man dreaded some exposure of his secret. So he said hastily, "I 'll go along with you, farmer," and in a moment was by Merton's side, as that worthy stopped to open the gate that led out of George's premises. His feelings were anything but pleasant when George called to him, —

"No, sir! stop. You are as good a witness as I could choose of what I have to say. Step this way if you please sir."

Meadows returned, clenched his teeth, and prepared for the worst, but inwardly he cursed his uneasy folly in staying here, instead of riding home the moment George had said "Yes!" to Australia.

George now looked upon the ground a moment; and there was something in his manner that arrested the attention of all.

Meadows turned hot and cold.

"I am going — to speak — to my brother, Mr. Meadows!" said he, syllable by syllable to Meadows in a way brimful of meaning.

"To me, George?" said William, a little uneasy.

"To you! Fall back a bit." (Some rustics were encroaching upon the circle.) "Fall back, if you please; this is a family matter."

Isaac Levi, instead of going quite away, seated himself on a bench outside the palings.

It was now William's turn to flutter: he said however to himself, "It is about the farm; it must be about the farm."

George resumed. "I 've often had it on my mind to speak to you, but I was ashamed, now that 's the truth; but now I am going away from her I must speak out, and I will — William!"

"Yes, George?"

"You 've taken — a fancy — to my Susan, William!"

At these words, which, though they had cost him so much to say, George spoke gravely and calmly like common words, William gave one startled look all round, then buried his face directly in his hands in a paroxysm of shame.

Susan, who was looking at George, remonstrated loudly, "How can you be so silly, George! I am sure that is the last idea poor William —"

George drew her attention to William by a wave of the hand.

She held her tongue in a moment, and turned very red, and lowered her eyes to the ground. It was a very painful situation — to none more than to Meadows, who was waiting his turn.

George continued: "Oh, it is not to reproach you, my poor lad. Who could be near her, and not warm to her? But she *is* my lass, Will, and no other man's. It is three years since she said the word. And though it was my hard luck there should be some coolness between us this bitter day, she will think of me when the ocean rolls between us, if no villain undermines me —"

"Villain! George," groaned William. "That is a word I never thought to hear from you."

"That 's why I speak in time," said George. "I do suppose I am safe against villainy here." And his eye swept lightly over both the men. "Any way, it shan't be a *mis*-take or a *mis*-understanding; it shall be villainy if *'t is* done. Speak, Susanna Merton, and speak your real mind once for all."

"Oh! George," cried Susan fluttering with love; "you shall not go in doubt of me. We are betrothed this three years, and I never regretted my choice a single moment. I never saw, I never shall see, the man I could bear to look on beside you, my beautiful George. Take my ring and my promise, George." And she put her ring on his little finger, and kissed his hand. "Whilst you are true to me, nothing but death shall part us twain. There never was any coolness between us, dear; you only thought so. You don't know what fools women are; how they delight to tease the man they love, and so torment them-

selves ten times more I always loved you, but never as I do to-day; *so* honest, *so* proud, so unfortunate; I love you, I honour you, I adore you, oh! my love! — my love! — my love!"

She saw but George — she thought but of George — and how to soften his sorrow, and remove his doubts, if he had any. And she poured out these words of love with her whole soul — with blushes and tears and all the fire of a chaste and passionate woman's heart: and she clung to her love; and her tender bosom heaved against his; and she strained him with tears and sighs to her bosom; and he kissed her beautiful head; and his suffering heart drew warmth from this heavenly contact.

The late exulting Meadows turned as pale as ashes, and trembled from head to foot.

"Do you hear, William?" said George.

"I hear, George," replied William in an iron whisper, with his sullen head sunk upon his breast.

George left Susan, and came between her and William.

"Then, Susan," said he rather loud, "here is your brother."

William winced.

"William! here is my life!" And he pointed to Susan. "Let no man rob me of it if one mother really bore us."

It went through William's heart like a burning arrow. And this was why George had taken him to their mother's grave That flashed across him too.

The poor sulky fellow's head was seen to rise inch by inch till he held it as erect as a king's.

"Never!" he cried half shouting half weeping. "Never, s'help me God! She's my sister from this hour — no more, no less. And may the red blight fall on my arm and my heart, if I or any man takes her from you — any man!" he cried, his temples flushing, and his eye glittering, "sooner than a hundred men should take her from you while I am here I'd die at their feet a hundred times."

Well done, sullen and rugged but honest man; the capital temptation of your life is wrestled with and thrown. That is

always to every man a close, a deadly, a bitter struggle; and we must all wade through this deep water at one hour or another of our lives: it is as surely our fate as it is one day to die.

It is a noble sight to see an honest man "cleave his own heart in twain, and fling away the baser part of it." These words, that burst from William's better heart, knocked at his brother's you may be sure. He came to William, "I believe you," said he; "I trust you, I thank you." Then he held out his hand; but nature would have more than that, in a moment his arm was round his brother's neck, where it had not been this many a year: he withdrew it as quickly half ashamed; and Anne Fielding's two sons grasped one another's hands, and holding hands turned away their heads and tried to hide their eyes.

They are stronger than bond, deed, or indenture, these fleshly compacts written by moist eyes, stamped by the gripe of eloquent hands, in those moments full of soul when men's hearts beat from their bosoms to their fingers' ends.

Isaac Levi came to the brothers, and said to William, "Yes, I will now," and then he went slowly and thoughtfully away to his own house.

"And now," faltered George, "I feel strong enough to go, and I'll go."

He looked round at all the familiar objects he was leaving, as if to bid them farewell; and last, whilst every eye watched his movements, he walked slowly up to his grandfather's chair.

"Grandfather," said he, "I am going a long journey, and mayhap shall never see you again: speak a word to me before I go."

The impassive old man took no notice, so Susan came to him. "Grandfather, speak to George; poor George is going into a far country."

When she had repeated this in his ear their grandfather looked up for a moment — "George, fetch me some snuff from where you're going."

A spasm crossed George's face; he was not to have a word of good omen from the aged man.

"Friends," said he, looking appealingly to all the rest, Meadows included, "I wanted him to say God bless you, but snuff is all his thought now. Well, old man, George won't forget your last word, such as 'tis."

In a hutch near the corner of the house was William's pointer Carlo. Carlo observing by the general movement that there was something on foot, had the curiosity to come out to the end of his chain, and as he stood there giving every now and then a little uncertain wag of his tail, George took notice of him and came to him and patted his head.

"Good-bye, Carlo," faltered George; "poor Carlo — you and I shall never go after the partridges again, Carlo: the dog shows more understanding than the Christian; bye, Carlo." Then he looked wistfully at William's dog, but he said nothing more.

William watched every look of George, but he said nothing at the time.

"Good-bye little village church, where I went to church man and boy; good-bye churchyard where my mother lies; there will be no church bells, Susan, where I am going; no Sunday bells to remind me of my soul and home."

These words, which he spoke with great difficulty, were hardly out of young Fielding's mouth when a very painful circumstance occurred; one of those things that seem the contrivance of some malignant spirit. The church bells in a moment struck up their very merriest peal!

George Fielding started, he turned pale and his lips trembled. "Are they mocking me?" he cried. "Do they take a thought what I am going through this moment the hard-hearted —"

"No! no! no!" cried William; "don't think it, George; I know what 'tis — I'll tell ye."

"What is it?"

"Well it is — well, George, it is Tom Clarke and Esther

Borgherst married to-day; only they could'nt have the ringers till the afternoon."

"Why Will, they have only kept company a year, and Susan and I have kept company three years; and Tom and Esther are married to-day; and what are George and Susan doing to-day? God help me! Oh, God help me! What *shall* I do? what *shall* I do?" And the stout heart gave way, and George Fielding covered his face with his hands, and burst out sobbing and crying.

Susan flung her arms round his neck — "Oh! George, my pride is all gone; don't go, don't think to go; have pity on us both, and don't go." And she clung to him — her bonnet fallen off, her hair dishevelled — and they sobbed and wept in one another's arms.

Meadows writhed with the jealous anguish this sad sight gave him, and at that moment he could have cursed the whole creation. He tried to fly, but he was rooted to the spot. He leaned sick as death against the palings.

George and Susan cried together, and then they wiped one another's eyes like simple country folk with one pocket-handkerchief; and then they kissed one another in turn, and made each other's tears flow fast again; and again wiped one another's eyes with one handkerchief.

Meadows griped the palings convulsively — hell was in his heart.

"Poor souls, God help them!" said William to himself in his purified heart.

The silence their sorrow caused all around was suddenly invaded by a voice that seemed to come from another world — it was Grandfather Fielding. "The autumn sun is not so waarm as *she* used to be!"

Yes, there was the whole map of humanity on that little spot in the county of Berks. The middle-aged man, a schemer, watching the success of his able scheme, and stunned and wounded by its recoil. And old age, callous to noble pain, all alive to discomfort, yet man to the last — blaming any one but Number One, cackling against heavenly bodies, accusing the

sun and the kitchen-fire of frigidity — not his own empty veins! And the two poor young things sobbing as if their hearts would break over their first great earthly sorrow.

George was the first to recover himself. "Shame upon me!" he cried; he drew Susan to his bosom, and pressed a long, burning kiss upon her brow.

And now all felt the wrench was coming. George, with a wild half-terrified look, signalled William to come to him.

"Help me, Will! you see I have no more manhood than a girl."

Susan instinctively trembled. George once more pressed his lips to her, as if they would grow there. William took her hand. She trembled more and more.

"Take my hand; take your brother's hand, my poor lass," said he.

She trembled violently; and then George gave a cry that seemed to tear his heart, and darted from them in a moment.

Poor Susan uttered more than one despairing scream, and stretched out both her hands for George. He did not see her, for he dared not look back.

"Bob, loose the dog," muttered William hastily, in a broken voice.

The dog was loosed, and ran after George, who, he thought, was only going for a walk. Susan was sinking pale and helpless upon her brother's bosom.

"Pray, sister," said gentle William; "pray, sister, as I must."

A faint shiver was all the answer; her senses had almost left her.

When George was a little way up the hill, something ran suddenly against his legs — he started — it was Carlo. He turned, and lifted up his hands to Heaven; and William could see that George was blessing him for this. Carlo was more than a dog to poor George at that cruel moment. Soon after that, George and Carlo reached the crown of the hill. George's figure stood alone a moment between them and the sky. He was seen to take his hat off, and raise his hands once more to

Heaven, whilst he looked down upon all he loved and left; and then he turned his sorrowful face again towards that distant land — and they saw him no more!

CHAPTER IV.

"THE world is full of trouble."

While we are young we do not see how true this ancient homely saying is.

That wonderful dramatic prologue the first chapter of Job is but a great condensation of the sorrows that fall like hail upon many a mortal house. Job's black day, like the day of the poetic prophets — the true *sacri vates* of the ancient world — is a type of a year — a bitter human year. It is terrible how quickly a human landscape all gilded meadow, silver river, and blue sky, can cloud and darken.

George Fielding had compared himself this very day to an oak-tree: "even so am I rooted to my native soil." His fate accepted his simile. The oak of centuries yields to an impalpable antagonist, whose very name stands in proverbs for weakness and insignificance. This thin light trifle rendered impetuous by motion buffets the king of the forest, tears his roots with fury out of the earth, and lays his towering head in the dust; and even so circumstances, none of them singly irresistible, converging to one point, buffeted sore another oak pride of our fields, and for aught I know of our whole island — an honest English yeoman; and tore him from his farm, from his house hard by his mother's grave, from the joy of his heart his Susan, and sent him who had never travelled a hundred miles in his life, across a world of waters to keep sheep at the Antipodes. A bereaved and desolate heart went with Farmer Dodd in the gig to Newborough; sad desolate and stricken hearts remained behind. When two loving hearts are torn bleeding asunder it is a shade better to be the one that is driven away into action, than the bereaved twin that petrifies at home.

The bustle, the occupation, the active annoyances, are some

sort of bitter distraction to the unfathomable grief — it is one little shade worse to lie solitary and motionless in the old scenes from which the sunlight is now fled.

It needed but a look at Susan Merton as she sat moaning and quivering from head to foot in George's kitchen, to see that she was in no condition to walk back to Grassmere Farm to-night.

So as she refused — almost violently refused — to stay at "The Grove," William harnessed one of the farm-horses to a cart and took her home round by the road.

"It is six miles that way 'stead of three, but then we sha'nt jolt her going that way," thought William.

He walked by the side of the cart in silence.

She never spoke but once all the journey, and that was about half way to complain in a sort of hopeless pitiful tone that she was cold: it was a burning afternoon.

William took off his coat, and began to tie it round her by means of the sleeves; Susan made a little silent, peevish, and not very rational resistance; William tied it round her by brotherly force.

They reached her home; when she got out of the cart her eye was fixed, her cheek white, she seemed like one in a dream.

She went into the house without speaking or looking at William. William was sorry she did not speak to him; however he stood disconsolately by the cart, asking himself what he could do next for her and George; presently he heard a slight rustle, and it was Susan coming back along the passage; "She has left something in the cart" thought he, and he began to look in the straw.

She came like one still in a dream, and put her hand out to William, and it appeared that was what she had come back for.

William took her hand and pressed it to his bosom a moment; at this Susan gave an hysterical sob or two, and crept away again to her own room.

What she suffered in that room the first month after George's departure I could detail perhaps as well as any man

living; but I will not; there is a degree of anguish one shrinks from intruding upon too familiarly in person: and even on paper the microscope should spare sometimes these beatings of the bared heart. It will be enough if I indicate by and by her state, after time and religion and good habits had begun to struggle, sometimes gaining sometimes losing, against the tide of sorrow. For the present let us draw gently back and leave her, for she is bowed to the earth — fallen on her knees, her head buried in the curtains of her bed; dark, faint and leaden, on the borders of despair — a word often lightly used through ignorance. Heaven keep us all from a single hour here or hereafter of the thing the word stands for; and Heaven comfort all true and loving hearts that read me, when their turn shall come to drain the bitter cup like Susan Merton.

CHAPTER V.

THE moment George Fielding was out of sight, Mr. Meadows went to the public-house, flung himself on his powerful black mare, and rode homewards without a word. One strong passion after another swept across his troubled mind. He burned with love, he was sick with jealousy, cold with despondency, and for the first time smarted with remorse. George Fielding was gone, gone of his own accord; but like the flying Parthian he had shot his keenest arrow in the moment of defeat.

"What the better am I?" thus ran this man's thoughts. "I have opened my own eyes, and Susan seems farther from me than ever now — my heart is like a lump of lead here — I wish I had never been born! — so much for scheming — I would have given a thousand pounds for this, and now I'd give double to be as I was before; I had honest hopes then; now where are they? How lucky it seemed all to go too. Ah! that is it — 'May all your good luck turn to wormwood!' that was his word — his very word — and my good luck is wormwood; so much for lifting a hand against grey hairs Jew or Gentile. Why did the old heathen provoke me then? I'd as soon die as live this day. That's right, start at a handful of straw; lie down in it

one minute and tremble at the sight of it the next, ye idiot. Oh, Susan! Susan! — Why do I think of her? why do I think of her? She loves that man with every fibre of her body. How she clung to him! how she grew to him! And I stood there and looked on it, and did not kill them both. Seen it! I see it now, it is burnt into my eyes and my heart for ever, I am in Hell! — I am in Hell! — Hold up, you blundering fool; has the devil got into you too? Perdition seize him! May he die and rot before the year's out, ten thousand miles from home! may his ship sink to the bottom of the —. What right have I to curse the man, as well as drive him across sea? Curse yourself, John Meadows. They are true lovers, and I have parted them, and looked on and seen their tears. Heaven pity them and forgive me. So he knew of his brother's love for her after all. Why didn't he speak to me I wonder, as well as to Will Fielding? The old Jew warned him against me I'll swear. Why? why because you are a respectable man, John Meadows, and he thought a hint was enough to a man of character. 'I do suppose I am safe from villainy here,' says he. That lad spared me, he could have given me a red face before them all; now if there are angels that float in the air, and see what passes amongst us sinners, how must John Meadows have looked beside George Fielding that moment? This love will sink my soul! I can't breathe between these hedges, my temples are bursting! Oh! you want to gallop, do you? gallop then, and faster than you ever did since you were foaled — confound ye!" With this he spurred his mare furiously up the bank, and went crashing through the dead hedge that surmounted it, he struck his hat at the same moment fiercely from his head (it was fast by a black ribbon to his button-hole), and as they lighted by a descent of some two feet on the edge of a grass-field he again drove his spurs into his great fiery mare, all vein and bone. Black Rachael snorted with amazement at the spur, and with warlike delight at finding grass beneath her feet and free air whistling round her ears; she gave one gigantic bound like a buck with arching back and all four legs in the air at once (it would have unseated many a rider but never moved the iron

Meadows), and with dilating nostril and ears laid back she hurled herself across country like a stone from a sling.

Meadows's house was about four miles and a half distant as the crow flies, and he went home to-day as the crow flies, only faster. None would have known the staid, respectable Meadows, in this figure, that came flying over hedge and ditch and brook, his hat dangling and leaping like mad behind him, his hand now and then clutching his breast, his heart tossed like a boat among the breakers, his lips white, his teeth clenched, and his eyes blazing! The mare took everything in her stride, but at last they came somewhat suddenly on an enormous high stiff fence; to clear it was impossible; by this time man and beast were equally reckless; they went straight into it and through it as a bullet goes through a pane of glass; and on again over brook and fence, ploughed field and meadow till Meadows found himself, he scarce knew how, at his own door. His old deaf servant came out from the stable-yard, and gazed in astonishment at the mare, whose flank panted, whose tail quivered, whose back looked as if she had been in the river, while her belly was stained with half a dozen different kinds of soil, and her rider's face streamed with blood from a dozen scratches he had never felt.

Meadows flung himself from the saddle, and ran up to his own room; he dashed his face and his burning hands into water: this seemed to do him a little good. He came down stairs; he lighted a pipe; (we are the children of habit;) he sat with his eyebrows painfully bent; people called on him, he fiercely refused to see them.

For the first time in his life he turned his back on business; he sat for hours by the fire-place; a fierce mental struggle wrenched him to and fro.

Evening came, still he sat collapsed by the fire-place. From his window among other objects two dwellings were visible; one distant four miles was a whitewashed cottage, tiled instead of thatched, adorned with creepers and roses and very clean, but in other respects little superior to labourers' cottages.

The other, distant six long miles, was the Grassmere farm-

house, where the Mertons lived; the windows seemed burnished gold this evening.

In the small cottage lived a plain old woman — a Methodist; she was Meadows's mother.

She did not admire worldly people, still less envied them.

He was too good a churchman and man of business to permit conventicles or psalm-singing at odd hours in his house. So she preferred living in her own, which moreover was her own — her very own own.

The old woman never spoke of her son, checked all complaints of him, and snubbed all experimental eulogies of him.

Meadows never spoke of his mother; paid her a small allowance with the regularity and affectionate grace of clockwork; never asked her if she didn't want any more — would not have refused her if she had asked for double.

This evening, whilst the sun was shining with all his evening glory on Susan Merton's house, Meadows went slowly to his window and pulled down the blind; and drawing his breath hard shut the loved prospect out.

He then laid his hand upon the table, and he said — "I swear by the holy bread and wine I took last month, that I will not put myself in the way of this strong temptation. I swear I will go no more to Grassmere Farm, never so long as I love Susan." He added, faintly, "Unless they send for me; and they won't do that, and I won't go of my own accord, I swear it. I have sworn it however, and I swear it again unless they send for me!"

Then he sat by the fire with his head in his hands — a posture he never was seen in before; next he wrote a note, and sent it hastily with a horse and cart to that small whitewashed cottage.

Old Mrs. Meadows sat in her doorway reading a theological work called "Believers' Buttons." She took the note, looked at it, — "Why this is from John, I think; what can he have to say to me?" She put on her spectacles again, which she had taken off on the messenger first accosting her, and deliberately opened, smoothed, and read the note: — it ran thus —

"Mother, I am lonely, come over and stay awhile with me, if you please.

"Your dutiful Son,

"JOHN MEADOWS."

"Here, Hannah" cried the old woman to a neighbour's daughter that was nearly always with her.

Hannah, a comely girl of fourteen, came running in.

"Here's John wants me to go over to his house; get me the pen and ink girl out of the cupboard, and I'll write him a word or two any way. Is there anything amiss?" said she quickly to the man.

"He came in with the black mare all in a lather, just after dinner, and he hasn't spoke to a soul since, that's all I know Missus: I think something has put him out, and he isn't soon put out, you know, he isn't."

Hannah left the room, after placing the paper as she was bid.

"You will all be put out that trust to an arm of flesh, all of ye master or man, Dick Messenger," said the disciple of John Wesley somewhat grimly — "Ay, and be put out of the kingdom of heaven too if ye don't take heed."

"Is that the news I'm to take back to Farnborough, Missus?" said Messenger with quiet rustic irony.

"No; I'll write to him."

The old woman wrote a few lines reminding Meadows that the pursuit of earthly objects could never bring any steady comfort, and telling him that she should be lost in his great house — that it would seem quite strange to her to go into the town after so many years quiet — but that if he was minded to come out and see her, she would be glad to see him and glad of the opportunity to give him her advice, if he was in a better frame for listening to it than last time she offered it to him, and that was two years come Martinmas.

Then the old woman paused, — next she reflected, — and afterwards dried her unfinished letter. And as she began slowly

to fold it up, and put it in her pocket — "Hannah," cried she thoughtfully.

Hannah appeared in the doorway.

"I dare say — you may fetch — my cloak and bonnet. Why if the wench hasn't got them on her arm. What, you made up your mind that I should go then?"

"That I did," replied Hannah. "Your warm shawl is in the cart, Mrs. Meadows."

"Oh! you did, did you. Young folks are apt to be sure and certain — I was in two minds about it, so I don't see how the child could be sure," said she, dividing her remark between vacancy and the person addressed; a grammatical privilege of old age.

"Oh! but *I* was sure for that matter," replied Hannah firmly.

"And what made the little wench so sure, I wonder?" said the old woman now in her black bonnet and scarlet cloak.

"Why la!" says Hannah, "because it's your son, ma'am — and you're his mother, Dame Meadows!"

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN MEADOWS had always been an active man, but now he was indefatigable. He was up at five every morning, and seemed ubiquitous; added a grey gelding to his black mare, and rode them both nearly off their legs. He surveyed land in half a dozen counties — he speculated in grain in half a dozen markets, and did business in shares. His plan in dealing with this ticklish speculation was simple: he listened to nothing anybody said, examined the venture himself, and, if it had a sound basis, bought when the herd were selling and sold whenever the herd were buying. Hence, he bought cheap and sold dear.

He also lent money, and contrived to solve the usurer's problem — perfect security, and huge interest.

He arrived at this by his own sagacity, and the stupidity of mankind.

Mankind are not wanting in intelligence; but, as a body, they have one intellectual defect — they are muddle-heads.

Now these muddle-heads have agreed to say that land is in all cases five times a surer security for money lent than moveables are. Whereas the fact is that sometimes it is and sometimes it is not. Owing to the above delusion the proprietor of land can always borrow money at four per cent., and other proprietors are often driven to give ten — twenty — thirty.

So John Meadows lent mighty little upon land, but much upon oat-ricks, waggons, advantageous leases, and such things, solid as land and more easily convertible into cash.

Thus without risk he got his twenty per cent. Not that he appeared in these transactions — he had too many good irons in the fire to let himself be called an usurer.

He worked this business as three thousand respectable men are working it in this nation. He had a human money-bag, whose strings he went behind a screen and pulled.

The human money-bag of Meadows was Peter Crawley.

This Peter Crawley, some years before our tale, lay crushed beneath a barrowful of debts — many of them to publicans. In him others saw a cunning fool and a sot — Meadows an unscrupulous tool: Meadows wanted a tool, and knew the cheapest way to get the thing was to buy it, so he bought up all Crawley's debts, sued him, got judgments out against him, and raising the axe of the law over Peter's head with his right hand offered him the left hand of fellowship with his left; down on his knees went Crawley, and resigned his existence to this great man.

Human creatures, whose mission it is to do whatever a man secretly bids them, are not entitled to long and interesting descriptions.

Crawley was fifty, wore a brown wig, the only thing about him that did not attempt disguise, and slouched in a brown coat and a shirt peppered with snuff.

In this life he was an infinitesimal attorney: Previously, unless Pythagoras was a goose, he had been a pole-cat.

Meadows was ambidexter. The two hands he gathered coin with were Meadows and Crawley. The first his honest hard-working hand — the second his three-fingered Jack, his presti-digital hand; with both he now worked harder than ever. He hurried from business to business — could not wait to chat, or drink a glass of ale after it; it was all work! work! work! — money! money! money! with John Meadows, and everything he touched turned to gold in his hands; yet for all this burning activity the man's heart had never been so little in business. His activity was the struggle of a sensible strong mind to fight against its one weakness.

"Cedit amor rebus; res age tutus eris," is a very wise saying, and Meadows by his own observation and instinct sought the best antidote for love.

But the Latins had another true saying, that "nobody is wise at all hours."

After his day of toil and success he used to be guilty of a sad inconsistency; he shut himself up at home for two hours, and smoked his pipe, and ran his eye over the newspaper, but his mind over Susan Merton.

Worse than this, in his frequent rides he used to go a mile or two out of his way to pass Grassmere farm-house; and however fast he rode the rest of his journey, he always let his nag walk by the farm-house, and his eye brightened with hope as he approached it, and his heart sank as he passed it without seeing Susan.

He now bitterly regretted the vow he had made, never to visit the Mertons again unless they sent for him.

"They have forgotten me altogether," said he bitterly. "Well, the best thing I can do is to forget them."

Now, Susan had forgotten him; she was absorbed in her own grief; but Merton was labouring under a fit of rheumatism, and this was the reason why Meadows and he did not meet. In fact, farmer Merton often said to his daughter, "John Meadows has not been to see us a long while."

"Hasn't he, father?" was Susan's languid and careless reply.

One Sunday, Meadows, weakened by his inner struggle, could not help going to Grassmere church. At least he would see her face. He had seated himself where he could see her. She took her old place by the pillar; nobody was near her. The light from a side window streamed full upon her: she was pale, and the languor of sorrow was upon every part of her face, but she was lovely as ever.

Meadows watched her, and noticed that more than once without any visible reason her eyes filled with tears, but she shed none.

He saw how hard she tried to give her whole soul to the services of the church and to the word of the preacher; he saw her succeed for a few minutes at a time, and then with a lover's keen eye he saw her heart fly away in a moment from prayer and praise and consolation, and follow and overtake the ship that was carrying her George farther and farther away from her across the sea; and then her lips quivered with earthly sorrow even as she repeated words that came from Heaven, and tried to bind to her heavy heart the prayers for succour in every mortal ill, the promises of help in every mortal woe, with which holy Church and holier writ comfort her and all the pure of heart in every age.

Then Meadows, who up to this moment had been pitying himself, had a better thought and pitied Susan. He even went so far as to feel that he ought to pity George; but he did not do it, he could not, he envied him too much; but he pitied Susan, and he longed to say something kind and friendly to her, even though there should not be a word or a look of love in it.

Susan went out by one of the church doors, Meadows by another, intending to meet her casually upon the road home. Susan saw his intention, and took another path, so that he could not come up with her without following her.

Meadows turned upon his heel and went home with his heart full of bitterness.

"She hates the sight of me," was his interpretation.

Poor Susan, she hated nobody, she only hated to have to speak to a stranger, and to listen to a stranger; and in her pre-

sent grief all were strangers to her except him she had lost and her father. She avoided Meadows not because he was Meadows, but because she wanted to be alone.

Meadows rode home despondently, then he fell to abusing his folly, and vowed he would think of her no more.

The next day finding himself at six o'clock in the evening seated by the fire in a reverie, he suddenly started fiercely up, saddled his horse, and rode into Newborough, and putting up his horse strolled about the streets, and tried to amuse himself looking at the shops before they closed.

Now it so happened that stopping before a bookseller's shop he saw advertised a work upon "The Australian Colonies."

"Confound Australia!" said Meadows to himself, and turned on his heel, but the next moment with a sudden change of mind he returned and bought the book: he did more, he gave the tradesman an order for every approved work on Australia that was to be had.

The bookseller, as it happened, was going up to London next day, so that in the evening Meadows had some dozen volumes in his house, and a tolerably correct map of certain Australian districts.

"Let me see," said Meadows, "what chance that chap has of making a thousand pounds out there." This was no doubt the beginning of it, but it did not end there. The intelligent Meadows had not read a hundred pages before he found out what a wonderful country this Australia is, how worthy a money-getter's attention or any thoughtful man's.

It seemed as if his rival drew Meadows after him wherever he went, so fascinated was he with this subject. And now all the evening he sucked the books like a leech.

Men observed about this time an irritable manner in Mr. Meadows which he had never shown before, and an eternal restlessness; they little divined the cause, or dreamed what a vow he had made, and what it cost him every day to keep it. So strong was the struggle within him, that there were mo-

ments when he feared he should go mad; and then it was that he learned the value of his mother's presence in the house.

There was no explanation between them, there could be no sympathy; had he opened his heart to her he knew she would have denounced his love for Susan Merton as a damnable crime. Once she invited his confidence —

"What ails you, John?" said the old woman. "You had better tell me; you would feel easier I'm thinking."

But he turned it off a little fretfully, and she never returned to the charge; but though there could be no direct sympathy, yet there was a soothing influence in this quaint old woman's presence. She moved quietly about, protecting his habits, not disturbing them; she seemed very thoughtful too, and cast many a secret glance of inquiry and interest at him when he was not looking at her.

This had gone on some weeks when one afternoon Meadows, who had been silent as death for a full half hour, started from his chair and said with sudden resolution —

"Mother, I must leave this part of the country for a while."

"That is news, John."

"Yes. I shall go into the mining district for six months, or a year perhaps."

"Well! go, John! you want a change. I think you can't do better than go."

"I will, and no later than to-morrow."

"That *is* sudden."

"If I was to give myself time to think, I should never go at all."

He went out briskly with the energy of this determination.

That same evening, about seven o'clock, as he sat reading by the fire, an unexpected visitor was announced, Mr. Merton.

He came cordially in and scolded Meadows for never having been to see him.

"I know you are a busy man," said the old farmer, "but you might have given us a look in coming home from market; it is

only a mile out of the way, and you are pretty well mounted in a general way."

Then the old man, a gossip, took up one of Meadows's books. "Australia! ah!" grunted Merton, and dropped it like a hot potato; he tried another, "why this is Australia, too; why they are all Australia as I am a living sinner." And he looked with a rueful curiosity into Meadows's face.

Meadows colored, but soon recovered his external composure.

"I have friends there," said he hastily, "who tell me there are capital investments in that country, and they say no more than the truth."

"Do you think *he* will do any good out there?" asked the old man, lowering his voice.

"I can't say," answered Meadows drily.

"Tell us something about that country, John," said Merton; "and if you was to ask me to take a glass of your homebrewed ale I don't think I should gainsay you."

The ale was sent for, and over it Meadows, whose powers of acquisition extended to facts as well as money, and who was full of this new subject, poured the agricultural contents of a dozen volumes into Mr. Merton.

The old farmer sat open-mouthed, transfixed with interest, listening to his friend's clear intelligent and masterly descriptions of this wonderful land. At last the clock struck nine; he started up in astonishment —

"I shall get a scolding if I stay later," said he, and off he went to Grassmere.

"Have you nothing else to say to me?" asked Meadows, as the farmer put his foot in the stirrup.

"Not that I know of," replied the other, and cantered away.

"Confound him!" muttered Meadows; "he comes and stops here three hours, drinks my ale, gets my knowledge without the trouble of digging for't, and goes away, and not a word from Susan, or even a word about her — one word would have paid me for all this loss of time — but no, I was not to have it. I will

be in Devonshire this time to-morrow — no, to-morrow is market day — but the day after I will go. I cannot live here and not see her, nor speak to her, — 'twill drive me mad."

The next morning as Meadows mounted his horse to ride to market, a carter's boy came up to him, and taking off his hat and pulling his head down by the front lock by way of salute put a note into his hand.

Meadows took it and opened it carelessly, it was a hand-writing he did not know. But his eye had no sooner glanced at the signature, than his eyes gleamed, and his whole frame trembled with emotion he could hardly hide. This was the letter —

"DEAR MR. MEADOWS,

"We have not seen you here a long time, and if you could take a cup of tea with us on your way home from market, my father would be glad to see you, if it is not troubling you too much. I believe he has some calves he wishes to show you.

"I am,

"Yours, respectfully,

"SUSAN MERTON.

"P.S. Father has been confined by rheumatism, and I have not been well this last month."

Meadows turned away from the messenger, and said quietly, "Tell Miss Merton I will come if possible." He then galloped off, and as soon as there was no one in sight gave vent to his face and his exulting soul.

Now he congratulated himself on his goodness in making a certain vow, and his firmness in keeping it.

"I kept out of their way, and they have invited me; my conscience is clear."

He then asked himself why Susan had invited him, and he could not but augur the most favourable results from this act on her part; true his manner to her had never gone beyond friendship, but women, he argued, are quick to discern their ad-

mirers under every disguise. She was dull and out of spirits, and wrote for him to come to her; this was a great point, a good beginning — "The sea is between her and George, and I am here, with time and opportunity on my side," said Meadows; and as these thoughts coursed through his heart, his grey nag, spurred by an unconscious heel, broke into a hand-gallop, and after an hour and a half hard riding they clattered into the town of Newborough.

The habit of driving hard bargains is a good thing for teaching a man to suppress his feelings and feign indifference, yet the civil nonchalance with which Meadows on his return from Newborough walked into the Mertons' parlour cost him no ordinary struggle.

The farmer received him cordially — Susan civilly, and with a somewhat feeble smile. The former soon engaged him in agricultural talk. Susan meanwhile made the tea in silence, and Meadows began to think she was capricious, and had no sooner got what she asked for than she did not care for it. After a while however she put in a word here and there, but with a discouraging languor.

Presently Farmer Merton brought her his tea-cup to be replenished: and upon this opportunity Susan said a word to her father in an undertone.

"Oh, ay!" replied the farmer very loud indeed; and Susan colored.

"What was you saying to me about that country — that Christmas-day is the hottest day in the year?" began Mr. Merton.

Meadows assented, and Merton proceeded to put other questions, in order, it appeared, to draw once more from Meadows the interesting information of last night.

Meadows answered shortly, and with repugnance. Then Susan put in: "And is it true, sir, that the flowers are beautiful to the eye, but have no smell, and that the birds have all gay feathers, but no song?" Then Susan, scarcely giving him time to answer, proceeded to put several questions, and her manner

was no longer languid, but bright and animated. She wound up her interrogatories with this climax:

"And *do* you think, sir, it is a country where George will be able to do any good. And will he have his health in that land, so far from every one to take care of him?"

And this doubt raised, the bright eyes were dimmed with tears in a moment.

Meadows gasped out, "Why not? why not?" but soon after, muttering some excuse about his horse, he went out with a promise to return immediately.

He was no sooner alone than he gave way to a burst of rage and bitterness.

"So, she only sent for me here to make me tell her about that infernal country where her George is. I will ride home this instant — this very instant — without bidding them good-bye."

Cooler thoughts came. He mused deeply a few minutes, and then clenching his teeth returned slowly to the little parlor; he sat down and took his line with a brisk and cheerful air.

"You were asking me some questions about Australia. I can tell you all about that country, for I have a relation there who writes to me. And I have read all the books about it too, as it happens."

Susan brightened up.

Meadows, by a great histrionic effort, brightened up too and poured out a flood of really interesting facts and anecdotes about this marvellous land.

Then, in the middle of a narrative which enchained both his hearers, he suddenly looked at his watch, and putting on a fictitious look of dismay and annoyance, started up with many excuses and went home — not however till Susan had made him promise to come again next market-day.

As he rode home in the moonlight Susan's face seemed still before him. The bright look of interest she had given him, the grateful smiles with which she had thanked him for his narration — all this had been so sweet at the moment, so bitter upon

the least reflection. His mind was in a whirl. At last he grasped at one idea, and held it as with a vice.

"I shall be always welcome to her if I can bring myself to talk about that detestable country. Well, I will grind my tongue down to it. She shall not be able to do without my chat; that shall be the beginning; the middle shall be different; the end shall be just the opposite. The sea is between him and her. I am here with opportunity resolution and money. I *will* have her!"

The next morning his mother said to him —

"John, do you think to go to-day?"

"Where, mother?"

"The journey you spoke of."

"What journey?"

"Among the mines."

"Not I."

"You have changed your mind, then."

"What, didn't you see I was joking?"

"No!" (very drily.)

Soon after this little dialogue Dame Meadows proposed to end her visit and return home. Her son yielded a cheerful assent. She went gravely and quietly back to her little cottage.

Meadows had determined to make himself necessary to Susan Merton. He brought a woman's cunning to bear against a woman; for the artifice to which his strong will bent his supple talent is one that many women have had the tact and temporary self-denial to carry out, but not one man in a hundred.

Men try to beat an absent rival by sneering at him, &c. By which means the asses make their absent foe present to her mind, and enlist the whole woman in his defence.

But Meadows was no ordinary man. Susan had given his quick intelligence a glimpse of a way to please her: he looked at the end, and crushed his will down to the thorny means.

Twice a-week he called on the Mertons, and much of his talk was Australia. Susan was grateful. To hear of the place where

George would soon be was the nearest approach she could make to hearing of George.

As for Meadows he gained a great point, but he went through tortures on the way. He could not hide from himself why he was so welcome; and many a time as he rode home from the Mertons he resolved never to return there, but he took no more oaths; it had cost him so much to keep the last; and that befell which might have been expected, after a while, the pleasure of being near the woman he loved, of being distinguished by her and greeted with pleasure however slight, grew into a habit and a need.

Achilles was a man of steel, but he had a vulnerable part; and iron natures like John Meadows have often one spot in their souls where they are far tenderer than the universal dove-eyed, and weaker than the omnimpotent. He never spoke a word of love to Susan, he knew it would spoil all; and she, occupied with another's image and looking upon herself as confessedly belonging to another, never suspected the deep passion that filled this man's heart. But if an observer of nature had accompanied John Meadows on market-day he might have seen — diagnostics.

All the morning his eye was cold and quick; his mouth, when silent, close, firm, and unreadable; his voice clear, decided, and occasionally loud. But when he got to old Merton's fire-side he mellowed and softened like the sun towards evening: there his forehead unknit itself; his voice, pitched in quite a different key from his key of business, turned also low and gentle, and soothed and secretly won the hearer by its deep, rich, and pleasant modulation and variety; and his eye turned deeper in colour, and, losing its keenness and restlessness, dwelt calmly and pensively for minutes at a time upon some little household object close to Susan; seldom, unless quite unobserved, upon Susan herself.

But the surrounding rustics suspected nothing, so calm and deep ran Meadows.

"Dear heart," said Susan to her father, "who would have thought Mr. Meadows would come a mile out of his way twice

a-week to talk to me about Geo — about the country where my heart is — and the folk say he thinks of nothing but money and won't move a step without making it."

"The folk are envious of him girl — that is all. John Meadows is too clever for fools, and too industrious for the lazy ones; he is a good friend of mine, Susan; if I wanted to borrow a thousand pounds I have only to draw on Meadows; he has told me so half-a-dozen times."

"We don't want his money, father," replied Susan, "nor anybody's; but I think a great deal of his kindness, and George shall thank him when he comes home — if ever he comes home to Susan again." These last words brought many tears with them, which the old farmer pretended not to notice, for he was getting tired of his daughter's tears. They were always flowing now at the least word, "and she used to be so good-humoured and cheerful like."

Poor Susan! she was very unhappy. If any one had said to her "to-morrow you die," she would have smiled on her own account, and only sighed at the pain the news would cause poor George. Her George was gone, her mother had been dead this two years. Her life, which had been full of innocent pleasures, was now utterly tasteless, except in its hours of bitterness when sorrow overcame her like a flood. She had a pretty flower-garden, in which she used to work. When George was at home what pleasure it had been to plant them with her lover's help, to watch them in the summer evening, to smell their gratitude for the artificial shower after a sultry day, and then to have George in, and set him admiring them with such threadbare enthusiasm, simply because they were hers, not in the least because they were Nature's.

I will go back like the epic writers, and sketch one of their little garden-scenes.

One evening, after watering them all, she sat down on a seat at the bottom of the garden, and casting her eyes over her whole domain, said, "Well now, I do admire flowers; don't you, George?"

"That I do," replied George, taking another seat, and

coolly turning his back on the parterre, and gazing mildly into Susan's eyes.

"Why, he is not even looking at them!" cried Susan, and she clapped her hands and laughed gleefully.

"Oh yes, he is; leastways he is looking at one of them, and the brightest of the lot to my fancy."

Susan colored with pleasure. In the country compliments don't drip constantly on beauty even from the lips of love. Then, suppressing her satisfaction, she said, "You will look for a flower in return for that, young man; come and let us see whether there is one good enough for you." So then they took hands, and Susan drew him demurely about the garden. Presently she stopped with a little start of hypocritical admiration: at their feet shone a marigold. Susan culled the gaudy flower, and placed it affectionately in George's button-hole. He received it proudly, and shaking hands with her, for it was time to part, turned away slowly. She let him take a step or two, then called him back. "He was really going off with that nasty thing." She took it out of his button-hole, rubbed it against his nose with well feigned-anger and then threw it away.

"You are all behind in flowers, George," said Susan; "here, this is good enough for you," and she brought out from under her apron, where she had carried the furtively-culled treasure, a lovely clove-pink: pretty soul, she had nursed, and watered, and cherished this choice flower this three weeks past for George, and this was her way of giving it him at last; so a true woman gives — (her life, if need be). George took it, and smelled it, and lingered a moment at the garden gate, and moralized on it. "Well, Susan dear, now I'm not so deep in flowers as you, but I like this a deal better than the marigold, and I'll tell you for why: it is more like you Susan."

"Ay! why?"

"I see flowers that are pretty, but have no smell, and I see women that have good looks, but no great wisdom nor goodness when you come nearer to them. Now the marigold is like those lasses: but this pink is good as well as pretty, so then it will stand for you, when we are apart, as we mostly are — worse luck for me."

"Oh, George," said Susan, dropping her quizzing manner, "I am a long way behind the marigold or any flower in comeliness and innocence, but at least I wish I was better."

"I don't!"

"Ay, but I do, ten times better, for — for —"

"For why! Susan."

Susan closed the garden gate, and took a step towards the house. Then turning her head over her shoulder with an ineffable look of tenderness, tipped with one tint of lingering archness, she let fall, "For your sake George," in the direction of George's feet, and glided across the garden into the house.

George stood watching her: he did not at first take up all she had bestowed on him, for her sex has a peculiar mastery over language, being diabolically angelically subtle in the art of saying something that expresses 1 oz. and implies 1 cwt.; but when he did comprehend, his heart exulted. He strode home as if he trod on air and often kissed the little flower he had taken from the beloved hand, "and with it words of so sweet breath composed, as made the thing more rich;" and as he marched past the house kissing the flower, need I tell my reader that so innocent a girl as Susan was too high-minded to watch the effect of her proceedings from behind the curtains. I hope not, it would surely be superfluous to relate what none would be green enough to believe.

These were Susan's happy days: now all was changed: she bade one of the farm servants look to the garden. He accepted the charge, and her flowers' drooping heads told how nobly he fulfilled it. Susan was charitable. Every day it had been her custom to visit more than one poor person; she carried meal to one, soup to another, linen to another, meat and bread to another, money to another: to all, words and looks of sympathy; this practice she did not even now give up, for it came under the head of her religious duties; but she relaxed it. She often sent to places where she used to go. Until George went she had never thought of herself; and so the selfishness of those she relieved had not struck her: and now it made her bitter to see that none of those she pitied, pitied her. The moment

she came into their houses, it was, "*My* poor head, Miss Merton; *my* old bones do ache so.

"I think a bit of your nice bacon would do ME good. I'M a poor sufferer, Miss Merton. *My* boy is 'listed. I thought as how you'd forgotten *me* altogether: but 'tis hard for poor folk to keep a friend.

"You see, Miss, *my* bed-room window is broken in one or two places. John, he stopped it up with paper the best way he could, but la, bless you, paper baint like glass. It is very dull for *me*: you see, Miss, I can't get about now as I used to could, and I never was no great reader. I often wish as some one would step in and knock me on the head, for I be no use, I baint, neer a mossel." No one of them looked up in her face, and said, "Lauks how pale *you* ha got to look, Miss; I hopes as how nothing amiss haven't happened to *you*, that have been so kind to us this many a day:" yet suffering of some sort was plainly stamped on the face and in the manner of this relieving angel. When they poured out their vulgar woes, Susan made an effort to forget her own and to cheer as well as relieve them: but she had to compress her own heart hard to do it; and this suppression of fe{ling makes people more or less bitter: she had better have out with it, and scolded them well for talking as if they alone were unhappy; but her woman's nature would not let her. They kept asking her for pity, and she still gulped down her own heart, and gave it them, till at last she began to take a spite against her pets; so then she sent to most of them instead of going. She sent rather larger slices of beef and bacon, and rather more yards of flannel than when she used to carry the like to them herself. Susan had one or two young friends, daughters of farmers in the neighbourhood, with whom she was a favourite, though the gayer ones sometimes quizzed her for her religious tendencies, and her lamentable indifference to flirtation: but then she was so good, and so good-humoured and tolerant of other people's tastes. The prattle of these young ladies became now intolerable to Susan, and when she saw them coming to call on her, she used to snatch up her bonnet, and fly and lock herself up in a closet at the top of

the house, and read some good book as quiet as a mouse, till the servants had hunted for her, and told them she must be out. She was not in a frame of mind to sustain tarlatans, barege, the history of the last hop, and the prophecies of the next; the wounded deer shrank from its gambolling associates and indeed from all strangers except John Meadows: "He talks to me about something worth talking about," said Susan Merton. It happened one day while Susan was in this sad and I may say dangerous state of mind that the servant came up to her, and told her a gentleman was on his horse at the door and wanted to see Mr. Merton.

"Father is at market, Jane."

"Yes, Miss, but I told the gentleman you were at home."

"Me! what have I to do with father's visitors?"

"Miss," replied Jane mysteriously, "it is a parson, and you are so fond of them, I could not think to let him go away without getting a word with anybody; and he has such a face — La, Miss, you never saw such a face."

"Silly girl, what have I to do with handsome faces."

"But he is not handsome, Miss, not in the least, only he is beautiful. You go and see else."

"I hate stranger's faces; but I will go to him Jane; it is my duty since it is a clergyman. I will just go up stairs."

"La, Miss, what for? you are always neat, you are — nobody ever catches you in your dishables like the rest of 'em."

"I'll just smooth my hair."

"La, Miss, what for? it is smooth as marble — it always is."

"Where is he, Jane?"

"In the front parlour."

"I won't be a moment."

She went up stairs. There was no necessity; Jane was right there: but it was a strict custom in the country, and is for that matter, and will be till time and vanity shall be no more: more majorum a girl must go up and look at herself in the glass if she did nothing more, before coming in to receive company.

Susan entered the parlour: she came in so gently that she had a moment to observe her visitor before he saw her. He had

seated himself with his back to the light, and was devouring a stupid book on husbandry that belonged to her father. The moment she closed the door he saw her, and rose from his seat.

"Miss Merton?"

"Yes, sir."

"The living of this place has been vacant more than a month."

"Yes, sir."

"It will not be filled up for three months perhaps."

"So we hear, sir."

"Meantime you have no church to go to nearer than Barmstoke, which is chapel-of-ease to this place, but two miles distant."

"Two miles and-a-half, sir."

"So then the people here have no Divine service on the Lord's day."

"No, sir, not for the present," said Susan meekly, lowering her lashes; as if the clergyman had said, "this is a parish of heathens, whereof you are one."

"Nor any servant of God to say a word of humility and charity to the rich, of eternal hope to the poor, and" (here his voice sunk into sudden tenderness) "of comfort to the sorrowful."

Susan raised her eyes, and looked him over with one dove-like glance, then instantly lowered them.

"No, sir, we are all under a cloud here," said Susan sadly.

"Miss Merton, I have undertaken the duty here until the living shall be filled up; but you shall understand that I live thirty miles off, and have other duties, and I can only ride over here on Saturday afternoon, and back Monday at noon."

"Oh, sir!" cried Susan, "half a loaf is better than no bread! The parish will bless you, sir, and no doubt," added she timidly, "the Lord will reward you for coming so far to us!"

"I am glad you think so," said the clergyman thoughtfully. "Well, let us do the best we can: tell me first, Miss Merton, do you think the absence of a clergyman is regretted here?"

"Regretted, sir! dear heart, what a question: you might

as well ask me, do father's turnips long for rain after a month's drought;" and Susan turned on her visitor a face into which the innocent venerating love her sex have for an ecclesiastic flashed without disguise.

Her companion smiled, but it was with benevolence not with gratified vanity.

"Let me now explain my visit. Your father is one of the principal people in the village. He can assist me or thwart me in my work. I called to invite his co-operation. Some clergymen are jealous of co-operation; I am not: it is a good thing for all parties; best of all for those who co-operate with us; for in giving alms wisely they receive grace, and in teaching the ignorant they learn themselves. Am I right?" added he rather sharply, turning suddenly upon Susan.

"Oh, sir," said Susan, a little startled, "it is for me to receive your words, not to judge them."

"Humph!" said the reverend gentleman rather drily; he hated intellectual subserviency: he liked people to think for themselves; and to end by thinking with him.

"Father will never thwart you, sir, and I—I will co-operate with you, sir, if you will accept of me," said Susan innocently.

"Thank you, then let us begin at once." He took out his watch. "I have an hour and-a-half to spare, then I must gallop back to Oxford. Miss Merton, I should like to make acquaintance with some of the people. Suppose we go to the school, and see what the children are learning; and then visit one or two families in the village, so I shall catch a glimpse of the three generations I have to deal with. My name is Francis Eden. You are going to get your bonnet?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you."

They passed out through the garden. Mr. Eden stopped to look at the flowers. Susan coloured.

"It has been rather neglected of late," said she apologetically.

"It must have been very well taken care of before, then,"

said he, "for it looks charming now. Ah! I love flowers dearly," and he gave a little sigh.

They reached the school, and Mr. Eden sat down and examined the little boys and girls. When he sat down, Susan winced. How angry he will be at their ignorance! thought Susan. But Mr. Eden, instead of putting on an awful look, and impressing on the children that a being of another generation was about to attack them, made himself young to meet their minds. A pleasant smile disarmed their fears. He spoke to them in very simple words and childish idioms, and told them a pretty story, which interested them mightily. Having set their minds really working, he put questions arising fairly out of his story, and so fathomed the moral sense and the intelligence of more than one. In short he drew the brats out instead of crushing them in. Susan stood by, at first startled at the line he took, then observant, then approving. Presently he turned to her.

"And which is your class, Miss Merton?"

Susan coloured.

"I take these little girls when I come, sir."

"Miss Merton has not been near us this fortnight," said a pert teacher.

Susan could have beat her. What will this good man think of me now? thought poor Susan.

To her grateful relief, the good man took no notice of the observation; he looked at his watch.

"Now, Miss Merton, if I am not giving you too much trouble;" and they left the school.

"You wish to see some of the folk in the village, sir?"

"Yes."

"Where shall I take you first, sir?"

"Where I ought to go first."

Susan looked puzzled.

Mr. Eden stopped dead short.

"Come, guess," said he, with a radiant smile, "and don't look so scared. I'll forgive you if you guess wrong."

Susan looked this way and that, encouraged by his merry

smile. She let out — scarce above a whisper, and in a tone of interrogation, as who should say this is not to be my last chance since I have only asked a question not risked an answer —

"To the poorest, Mr. Eden?"

"Brava! she has guessed it," cried the Reverend Frank triumphantly; for he had been more anxious she should answer right than she had herself. "Young lady, I have friends with their heads full of Latin and Greek who could not have answered that so quickly as you; one proof more how goodness brightens intelligence," added he in soliloquy. "Here's a cottage."

"Yes sir I was going to take you into this one if you please."

They found in the cottage a rheumatic old man, one of those we alluded to as full of his own complaints. Mr. Eden heard these with patience, and then, after a few words of kind sympathy and acquiescence, for he was none of those hard humbugs who tell a man that old age rheumatism and poverty are strokes with a feather, he said quietly —

"And now for the other side; now tell me what you have to be grateful for."

The old man was taken aback, and his fluency deserted him. On the question being repeated, he began to say that he had many mercies to be thankful for. Then he higgled and hammered and fumbled for the said mercies, and tried to enumerate them, but in phrases conventional and derived from tracts and sermons; whereas his statement of grievances had been idiomatic.

"There that will do," said Mr. Eden smiling, "say nothing you don't feel; what is the use? May I ask you a few questions," added he, courteously; then, without waiting for permission he dived skilfully into this man's life, and fished up all the pearls — the more remarkable passages.

Many years ago this old man had been a soldier, had fought in more than one great battle, had retreated with Sir John Moore upon Corunna, and been one of the battered and weary but invincible band, who wheeled round and stunned the pursuers on that bloody and glorious day. Mr. Eden went with the old man to Spain, discussed with great animation the retreat,

the battle, the position of the forces, and the old soldier's personal prowess. Old Giles perked up, and dilated, and was another man; he forgot his rheumatism, and even his old age. Twice he suddenly stood upright as a dart on the floor, and gave the word of command like a trumpet in some brave captain's name; and his cheek flushed, and his eye glittered with the light of battle. Susan looked at him with astonishment. Then when his heart was warm and his spirits attentive Mr. Eden began to throw in a few words of exhortation. But even then he did not bully the man into being a Christian; gently, firmly, and with a winning modesty, he said — "I think you have much to be thankful for like all the rest of us. Is it not a mercy you were not cut off in your wild and dissolute youth? you might have been slain in battle."

"That I might sir; three of us went from this parish and only one came home again."

"You might have lost a leg or an arm as many a brave fellow did; you might have been a cripple all your days."

"That is true, sir."

"You survive here in a Christian land, in possession of your faculties; the world, it is true, has but few pleasures to offer you — all the better for you. Oh, if I could but make that as plain to you as it is to me. You have every encouragement to look for happiness there, where alone it is to be found. Then courage, corporal; you stood firm at Corunna — do not give way in this your last and most glorious battle. The stake is greater than it was at Vittoria, or Salamanca, or Corunna, or Waterloo. The eternal welfare of a single human soul weighs a thousand times more than all the crowns and empires in the globe. You are in danger, sir. Discontent is a great enemy of the soul. You must pray against it — you must fight against it."

"And so I will, sir; you see if I don't."

"You read, Mr. Giles?" Susan had told Mr. Eden his name at the threshold.

"Yes, sir; but I can't abide them nasty little prints they bring me."

"Of course you can't. Printed to sell, not to read, eh? Here is a book. The type is large, clear, and sharp. This is an order-book, corporal. It comes from the great Captain of our Salvation. Every sentence in it is gold; yet I think I may venture to pick out a few for your especial use at present." And Mr. Eden sat down; and producing from his side-pockets, which were very profound, some long thin slips of paper, he rapidly turned the leaves of the Testament and inserted his marks; but this occupation did not for a moment interrupt his other proceedings.

"There is a pipe — you don't smoke, I hope?"

"No, sir; leastways not when I han't got any baccy, and I've been out of that this three days — worse luck."

"Give up smoking corporal, it is a foul habit."

"Ah, sir! you don't ever have a half-empty belly and a sorrowful heart, or you wouldn't tell an old soldier to give up his pipe."

"Take my advice. Give up all such false consolation, to oblige me now."

"Well, sir, to oblige you, I'll try; but you don't know what his pipe is to a poor old man full of nothing but aches and pains, or you wouldn't have asked me," and old Giles sighed. Susan sighed too, for she thought Mr. Eden cruel for once.

"Miss Merton," said the latter sternly, his eye twinkling all the time, "he is incorrigible; and I see you agree with me that it is idle to torment the incurable. So" (diving into the capacious pocket) "here is an ounce of his beloved poison," and out came a paper of tobacco. Corporal's eyes brightened with surprise and satisfaction. "Poison him, Miss Merton, poison him quick, don't keep him waiting."

"Poison him, sir?"

"Fill his pipe for him, if you please."

"That I will, sir, with pleasure." A white hand with quick and supple fingers filled the brown pipe.

"That is as it should be: let beauty pay honour to courage; above all, to courage in its decay."

The old man grinned with gratified pride. The white hand

lighted the pipe, and gave it to the old soldier. He smiled gratefully all round, and sucked his homely consolation.

"I compound with you, corporal. You must let me put you on the road to heaven, and, in return, I must let you go there in a cloud of tobacco — ugh!"

"I'm agreeable sir," said Giles drily, withdrawing his pipe for a moment.

"There," said Mr. Eden closing the marked Testament, "read often in this book. Read first the verses I have marked, for these very verses have dropped comfort on the poor, the aged and the distressed for more than eighteen hundred years, and will till time shall be no more. And now good-bye, and God bless you."

"God bless you, sir, wherever you go," cried the old man with sudden energy, "for you have comforted my poor old heart. I feel as I han't felt this many a day: your words are like the bugles sounding a charge all down the line. You must go, I suppose; but do ye come again and see me. And, Miss Merton, you never come to see me now, as you used."

"Miss Merton has her occupations like the rest of us," said Mr. Eden quickly; "but she will come to see you — won't she?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" replied Susan, hastily. So then they returned to the farm, for Mr. Eden's horse was in the stable. At the door they found Mr. Merton.

"This is father, sir. Father, this is Mr. Eden, that is coming to take the duty here for awhile."

After the ordinary civilities Susan drew her father aside and exchanging a few words with him disappeared into the house. As Mr. Eden was mounting his horse, Mr. Merton came forward, and invited him to stay at his house whenever he should come to the parish. Mr. Eden hesitated.

"Sir," said the farmer, "you will find no lodgings comfortable within a mile of the church, and we have a large house not half occupied. You can make yourself quite at home."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Merton, but must not trespass too far upon your courtesy."

"Well, sir," replied the farmer, "we shall feel proud if you can put up with the like of us."

"I will come. I am much obliged to you sir and to your daughter."

He mounted his horse and bade the farmer good morning Susan came out and stood on the steps and curtsied low — rustic fashion — but with a grace of her own. He took off his hat to her as he rode out of the gate, gave her a sweet bright smile of adieu, and went down the lane fourteen miles an hour. Old Giles was seated outside his own door with a pipe and a book. At the sound of horses' feet he looked up, and recognized his visitor, whom he had seen pass in the morning. He rose up erect and saluted him, by bringing his thumb with a military wave to his forehead. Mr. Eden saluted him in the same manner, but without stopping. The old soldier sat down again, and read and smoked. The pipe ended — that solace was not of an immortal kind — but the book remained; he read it calmly but earnestly in the warm air till day declined.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next Saturday Susan was busy preparing two rooms for Mr. Eden — a homely but bright bed-room looking eastward, and a snug room where he could be quiet down stairs. Snowy sheets and curtains and toilet-cover showed the good housewife. The windows were open, and a beautiful nosegay of Susan's flowers on the table. Mr. Eden's eye brightened at the comfort, neatness, and freshness of the whole thing; and Susan, who watched him furtively, felt pleased to see him pleased.

On Sunday he preached in the parish church. The sermon was opposite to what the good people here had been subject to; instead of the vague and cold generalities of an English sermon, he drove home-truths home in business-like English. He used a good many illustrations, and these were drawn from matters with which this particular congregation were conversant. He was as full of similes here as he was sparing of them when he preached before the University of Oxford. Any one who had

read this sermon in a book of sermons would have divined what sort of congregation it was preached to — a primrose of a sermon. Mr. Eden preached from notes and to the people — not the air. Like every born orator he felt his way with his audience, whereas the preacher, who is not an orator, throws out his fine things, hit or miss, and does not know and feel and care whether he is hitting or missing. "Open your hand, shut your eyes, and fling out the good seed so much per foot — that is enough." No. This man preached to the faces and hearts that happened to be round him. He established between himself and them a pulse, every throb of which he felt and followed. If he could not get hold of them one way, he tried another; he would have them — he was not there to fail. His discourse was human; it was man speaking to man on the most vital and interesting topic in the world or out of it; it was more, it was brother speaking to brother. Hence some singular phenomena: — First, when he gave the blessing, (which is a great piece of eloquence commonly reduced to a very small one by monotonous or feeble delivery) and uttered it, like his discourse, with solemnity, warmth, tenderness, and all his soul, the people lingered some moments in the church and seemed unwilling to go at all. Second, nobody mistook their pew for their four-poster during the sermon. This was the more remarkable, as many of the congregation had formed a steady habit of coming to this place once a-week with the single view of snatching an hour's repose from earthly and heavenly cares.

The next morning Mr. Eden visited some of the poorest people in the parish. Susan accompanied him all eyes and ears: she observed that his line was not to begin by dictating his own topic, but lie in wait for them; let them first choose their favourite theme, and so meet them on this ground, and bring religion to bear on it. "Oh, how wise he is!" thought Susan, "and how he knows the heart."

One Sunday evening three weeks after his first official visit he had been by himself to see some of the poor people, and on his return found Susan alone. He sat down and gave an account of his visits.

"How many ounces of tea and tobacco did you give away, sir?" asked Susan, with an arch smile.

"Four tea, two tobacco," replied the reverend gentleman.

"I do notice sir you never carry gingerbread or the like for the children."

"No; the young don't want lollypops, for they have youth. Old age wants everything, so the old are my children, and I tea and tobacco them."

After this there was a pause.

"Miss Merton, you have shown me many persons who need consolation, but there is one you say nothing about."

"Have I, sir? Who? Oh, I think I know. Old dame Clayton?"

"No, it is a young demoiselle."

"Then I don't know who it can be."

"Guess."

"No sir," said Susan, looking down.

"It is yourself, Miss Merton."

"Me, sir! Why, what is the matter with me?"

"That you shall tell me, if you think me worthy of your confidence."

"Oh, thank you, sir. I have my little crosses no doubt, like all the world; but I have health and strength: I have my father."

"My child, you are in trouble. You were crying when I came in."

"Indeed I was not, sir! — how did you know I was crying?"

"When I came in you turned your back to me, instead of facing me, which is more natural when any one enters a room; and soon after you made an excuse for leaving the room, and when you came back there was a drop of water in your right eyelash."

"It need not have been a tear, sir!"

"It was not: it was water; you had been removing the traces of tears."

"Girls are mostly always crying sir; often they don't know for why, but they don't care to have it noticed always."

"Nor would it be polite or generous; but this of yours is a deep grief, and alarms me for you. Shall I tell you how I know? You often yawn and often sigh; when these two things come together at your age they are signs of a heavy grief; then it comes out that you have lost your relish for things that once pleased you. The first day I came here you told me your garden had been neglected of late, and you blushed in saying so. Old Giles and others asked you before me why you had given up visiting them; you colored and looked down. I could almost have told them, but that would have made you uncomfortable. You are in grief, and no common grief."

"Nothing worth speaking to you about, sir; nothing I will ever complain of to any one."

"There I think you are wrong; religion has consoled many griefs; great griefs admit of no other consolation. The sweetest exercise of my office is to comfort the heavy hearted. Your heart is heavy, my poor lamb — tell me — what is it?"

"It is nothing, sir, that you would understand; you are very skilled, and notice-taking, as well as good, but you are not a woman, and you must excuse me, sir, if I beg you not to question me further on what would not interest you."

Mr. Eden looked at her compassionately, and merely said to her again, "What is it?" in a low tone of ineffable tenderness.

At this Susan looked in a scared manner this way and that. "Sir, do not ask me, pray do not ask me so;" then she suddenly lifted her hands, "My George is gone across the sea! What shall I do! what shall I do!!" and she buried her face in her apron.

This burst of pure Nature — this simple cry of a suffering heart — was very touching; and Mr. Eden, spite of his many experiences, was not a little moved. He sat silent, looking on her as an angel might be supposed to look upon human griefs, and as he looked on her various expressions chased one another across that eloquent face. Sweet and tender memories and regrets were not wanting amongst them. After a long pause he spoke in a tone soft and gentle as a woman's, and at first in a

voice so faltering, that Susan, though her face was hidden, felt there was no common sympathy there, and silently put out her hand towards it.

He murmured consolation. He said many gentle soothing things. He told her that it was sad — very sad the immense ocean should roll between two loving hearts; "but," said he, "there are barriers more impassable than the sea. Better so than that he should be here and jealousy, mistrust, caprice, or even temper come between you. I hope he will come back; I think he will come back."

She blessed him for saying so. She was learning to believe every thing this man uttered.

From consolation he passed to advice —

"You must do the exact opposite of what you have been doing."

"Must I?"

"You must visit those poor people; ay, more than ever you did; hear patiently their griefs; do not expect much in return, neither sympathy nor a great deal of gratitude; vulgar sorrow is selfish. Do it for God's sake and your own singleheartedly. Go to the school, return to your flowers, and never shun innocent society however dull. Milk and water is a poor thing, but it is a diluent, and all we can do just now is to dilute your grief."

He made her promise: "Next time I come tell me all about you and George. Give sorrow words, the grief that does not speak whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break."

"Oh! that is a true word," sobbed Susan, "that is very true. Why a little of the lead seems to have dropped off my heart now I have spoken to you, sir."

All the next week Susan bore up as bravely as she could, and did what Mr. Eden had bade her, and profited by his example. She learned to draw from others the full history of their woes; and she found that many a grief bitter as her own had passed over the dwellers in those small cottages; it did her some little good to discover kindred woes, and much good to go out of herself awhile and pity them.

This drooping flower recovered her head a little, but still the sweetest hour in all the working days of the week was that which brought John Meadows to talk to her of Australia.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUSAN MERTON had two unfavored lovers; it is well to observe how differently these two behaved. William Fielding stayed at home, threw his whole soul into his farm, and seldom went near the woman he loved but had no right to love. Meadows dangled about the flame; ashamed and afraid to own his love he fed it to a prodigious height by encouraging it and not expressing it. William Fielding was moody and cross and sad enough at times; but at others a little spark ignited inside his heart, and a warm glow diffused itself from that small point over all his being. I think this spark igniting was an approving conscience commencing its uphill work of making a disappointed lover but honest man content.

Meadows on his part began to feel content and a certain complacency take the place of his stormy feelings. Twice a-week he passed two hours with Susan. She always greeted him with a smile, and naturally showed an innocent satisfaction in these visits, managed as they were with so much art and self-restraint. On Sunday too he had always a word or two with her.

Meadows, though an observer of religious forms, had the character of a very wordly man, and Susan thought it highly to his credit that he came six miles to hear Mr. Eden.

"But Mr. Meadows, your poor horse," said she, one day. "I doubt it is no sabbath to him now."

"No more it is," said Meadows, as if a new light came to him from Susan. The next Sunday he appeared in dusty shoes, instead of top-boots.

Susan looked down at them, and saw, and said nothing, but she smiled. Her love of goodness and her vanity were both gratified a little.

Meadows did not stop there; wherever Susan went he fol-

lowed modestly in her steps. Nor was this mere cunning. He loved her quite well enough to imitate her, and try and feel with her; and he began to be kinder to the poor, and to feel good all over, and comfortable. He felt as if he had not an enemy in the world. One day in Farnborough he saw William Fielding on the other side the street. Susan Merton did not love William, therefore Meadows had no cause to hate him. He remembered William had asked a loan of him and he had declined. He crossed over to him.

"Good day, Mr. William."

"Good day, Mr. Meadows."

"You were speaking to me one day about a trifling loan. I could not manage it just then, but now —" Here Meadows paused. He had been on the point of offering the money, but suddenly, by one of those instincts of foresight these able men have, he turned it off thus: "but I know who will. You go to Lawyer Crawley; he lends money to people of credit."

"I know he does; but he won't lend it me."

"Why not?"

"He does not like us. He is a poor sneaking creature, and my brother George he caught Crawley selling up some poor fellow or other, and they had words; leastways it went beyond words I fancy. I don't know the rights of it, but George was a little rough with him by all accounts."

"And what has that to do with this?" said the man of business coolly.

"Why, I am George's brother."

"And if you were George himself and he saw his way to make a shilling out of you he would do it, wouldn't he? There, you go to Crawley and ask him to lend you one hundred pounds, and he will lend it you, only he will make you pay heavy interest, heavier than I should you know if I could manage it myself."

"Oh, I don't care," said simple William; "thank you kindly Mr. Meadows," and off he went to Crawley.

He found that worthy in his office. Crawley, who instantly guessed his errand, and had no instructions from Meadows,

promised himself the satisfaction of refusing the young man. He asked with a cringing manner and a treacherous smile "What security, sir?"

Poor William higgled and hammered, and offered first one thing, which was blandly declined for this reason; then another, which was blandly declined for that, Crawley drinking deep draughts of mean vengeance all the while from the young man's shame and mortification, when the door opened, a man walked in, and gave Crawley a note, and vanished. Crawley opened the note; it contained a cheque drawn by Meadows, and these words: "Lend W. F. the money at ten per cent. on his acceptance of your draft at two months." Crawley put the note and cheque in his pocket.

"Well, sir," said he to William, "you stay here, and I will see if I have got a loose hundred in the bank to spare." He went over to the bank, cashed the cheque, drew a bill of exchange at two months' date, deducted the interest and stamp, and William accepted it, and Crawley bowed him out cringing, smiling, and secretly shooting poisoned arrows out of his venomous eye in the direction of William's heels.

William thanked him warmly.

This loan made him feel happy.

He had paid his brother's debt to the landlord by sacrificing a large portion of his grain at a time the price was low; and now he was so cramped he had much ado to pay his labour when this loan came. The very next day he bought several hogs: — hogs, as George had sarcastically observed, were William Fielding's hobby; he had confidence in that animal. Potatoes and pigs versus sheep and turnips was the theory of William Fielding.

Now the good understanding between William and Meadows was not to last long. William, though he was too wise to visit Grassmere Farm much, was mindful of his promise to George, and used to make occasional inquiries after Susan. He heard that Meadows called at the farm twice a-week, and he thought it a little odd. He pondered on it, but did not quite go the length of suspecting anything, still less of suspecting Susan.

Still he thought it odd, but he thought it odder, when one market-day old Isaac Levi said to him, —

"Do you remember the promise you made to the lion-hearted young man your brother?"

"Do you ask that to affront me?"

"You never visit her; and others are not so neglectful."

"Who?"

"Go this evening and you will see."

"Yes, I will go, and I will soon see if there is anything in it," said William, not stopping even to inquire why the old Jew took all this interest in the affair.

That evening, as Meadows was in the middle of a description of the town of Sydney, Susan started up. "Why here is William Fielding!" and she ran out and welcomed him in with much cordiality, perhaps with some excess of cordiality.

William came in, and saluted the farmer and Meadows in his dogged way. Meadows was not best pleased, but kept his temper admirably, and leaving Australia, engaged both the farmers in a conversation on home topics. Susan looked disappointed. Meadows was content with that, and the party separated half an hour sooner than usual.

The next market evening in strolls William; Meadows again plays the same game. This time Susan could hardly restrain her temper. She did not want to hear about the Grassmere acres, and "The Grove," and oxen and hogs, but about something that mattered to George.

But when the next market evening William arrived before Mr. Meadows, she was downright provoked and gave him short answers, which raised his suspicions and made him think he had done wisely in coming. This evening Susan excused herself and went to bed early.

She was in Farnborough the next market-day, and William met her and said, —

"I'll take a cup of tea with you to-night, Susan, if you are agreeable."

"William," said Susan sharply, "what makes you always come to us on market-day?"

"I don't know. What makes Mr. Meadows come that day?"

"Because he passes our house to go to his own I suppose; but you live but two miles off; you can come any day that you are minded."

"Should I be welcome, Susan?"

"What do you think Will? Speak your mind; I don't understand you."

"Seems to me I was not very welcome last time."

"If I thought that I wouldn't come again," replied Susan, as sharp as a needle. Then instantly repenting a little, she explained — "You are welcome to me, Will, and you know that as well as I do, but I want you to come some other evening if it is all the same to you."

"Why?"

"Why? because I am dull other evenings, and it would be nice to have a chat with you."

"Would it, Susan?"

"Of course it would; but that evening I have company — and he talks to me of Australia."

"Nothing else?" sneered the unlucky William.

Susan gave him such a look.

"And that interests me more than anything you can say to me — if you won't be offended," snapped Susan.

William bit his lip.

"Well then, I won't come this evening, eh! Susan."

"No, don't, that is a good soul."

"Les femmes sont impitoyables pour ceux qu'elles n'aiment pas." This is a harsh saying, and of course, not pure truth; but there is a deal of truth in it.

William was proud; and the consciousness of his own love for her made him less able to persist, for he knew she might be so ungenerous as to retort if he angered her too far. So he altered the direction of his battery. He planted himself at the gate of Grassmere Farm, and as Meadows got off his horse requested a few words with him. Meadows ran him over with one lightning glance, and then the whole man was on the defensive. William bluntly opened the affair.

"You heard me promise to look on Susan as my sister, and keep her as she is for my brother that is far away."

"I heard you Mr. William," said Meadows with a smile that provoked William, as the artful one intended it should.

"You come here too often, sir."

"Too often for who?"

"Too often for me, too often for George, too often for the girl herself. I won't have George's sweetheart talked about."

"You are the first to talk about her; if there 's scandal it is of your making."

"I won't have it — at a word."

Meadows called out — "Miss Merton, will you step here."

William was astonished at his audacity; he did not know his man.

Susan opened the parlour-window. "What is it, Mr. Meadows?"

"Will you step here, if you please?" Susan came. "Here is a young man tells me I must not call on your father or you."

"I say you must not do it often enough to make her talked of."

"Who dares to talk of me?" cried Susan, scarlet.

"Nobody, Miss Merton. Nobody but the young man himself; and so I told him. Is your father within? Then I 'll step in and speak with him any way." And the sly Meadows vanished to give Susan an opportunity of quarrelling with William while she was hot.

"I don't know how you came to take such liberties with me," began Susan, quite pale now with anger.

"It is for George's sake," said William doggedly.

"Did George bid you insult my friends and me? I would not put up with it from George himself, much less from you. I shall write to George, and ask him whether he wishes me to be your slave."

"Don't ye do so. Don't set my brother against me," remonstrated William ruefully.

"The best thing you can do is to go home and mind your farm, and get a sweetheart for yourself, and then you won't

trouble your head about me more than you have any business to do."

This last cut wounded William to the quick.

"Good evening, Susan."

"Good evening."

"Won't you shake hands?"

"It would serve you right if I said, No! But I won't make you of so much importance as you want to be. There! And come again as soon as ever you can treat my friends with respect."

"I shan't trouble you again for a while," said William sadly. "Good-bye. God bless you, Susan dear."

When he was gone the tears came into Susan's eyes, but she was bitterly indignant with him for making a scene about her, which a really modest girl hates. On her reaching the parlour Mr. Meadows was gone too, and that incensed her still more against William. "Mr. Meadows is affronted no doubt," said she, "and of course he would not come here to be talked of; he would not like that any more than I. A man that comes here to us out of pure good nature and nothing else."

The next market-day the deep Meadows did not come; Susan missed him and his talk; she had few pleasures, and this was one of them; but the next after he came as usual, and Susan did not conceal her satisfaction. She was too shy and he too wise to allude to William's interference. They both ignored the poor fellow and his honest clumsy attempt.

William, discomfited but not convinced, determined to keep his eye upon them both. "I swore it and I'll do it," said this honest fellow. "But I can't face her tongue: it goes through me like a pitchfork; but as for him" — and he clenched his fist most significantly; then he revolved one or two plans in his head, and rejected them each in turn. At last, a thought struck him — "Mr. Levi! he 't was that put me on my guard. I'll tell him." Accordingly, he recounted the whole affair and his failure to Mr. Levi. The old man smiled. "You are no match for either of these. You have given the maiden offence, just offence."

"Just offence! Mr. Levi. Now don t ye say so: why how?"

"By your unskilfulness, my son."

"It is all very well for you to say that, sir, but I can tell you women are kittle folk — manage them who can. I don't know what to do, I'm sure."

"Stay at home and till the land," replied Isaac somewhat drily. "I will go to Grassmere Farm."

CHAPTER IX.

"You going to leave us, Mr. Eden, and going to live in a gaol. Oh! Mr. Eden, I can't bear to think of it. You to be cooped up there among thieves and rogues, and perhaps murderers."

"They have the more need of me."

"And you, who love the air of heaven so; why, sir, I see you take off your very hat at times to enjoy it as you are walking along; you would be choked in a prison. Besides sir it is only little parsons that go there."

"What are little parsons?"

"Those that are not clever enough or good enough to be bishops and vicars, and so forth; not such ones as you."

"How odd! This is exactly what the Devil whispered in my ear when the question was first raised, but I did not expect to find you on his side."

"Didn't you, sir? Ah! well, if it is your duty I know I may as well hold my tongue. And then, such as you are not like other folk; you come like sunshine to some dark place, and when you have warmed it and lighted it a bit, Heaven, that sent you, will have you go and shine elsewhere. You came here, sir, you waked up the impenitent folk in this village, and comforted the distressed, and relieved the poor, and you have saved one poor broken-hearted girl from despair, from madness belike; and now we are not to be selfish, we must not hold you back, but let you run the race that is set before you, and remember your words and your deeds, and your dear face and voice to the last hour of our lives."

"And give me the benefit of your prayers, little sister, do not deny me them; your prayers that I may persevere to the end. Ay! it is too true, Susan; in this world there is nothing but meeting and parting; it is sad: we have need to be stout-hearted — stouter-hearted than you are. But it will not always be so: a few short years and we who have fought the good fight shall meet to part no more — to part no more — to part no more."

As he repeated these words half mechanically, Susan could see that he had suddenly become scarce conscious of her presence: the light of other days was in his eye and his lips moved inarticulately. Delicate-minded Susan left him, and with the aid of the servant brought out the tea-things, and set the little table on the grass square in her garden, where you could see the western sun. And then she came for Mr. Eden.

"Come, sir, there is not a breath of wind this evening, so the tea-things are set in the air. I know you like that."

The little party sat down in the open air. The butter, churned by Susan, was solidified cream. The bread not very white but home made, juicy, and sweet as milk. The tea seemed to diffuse a more flowery fragrance out of doors than it does in, and to mix fraternally with the hundred odours of Susan's flowers that now perfumed the air, and the whole innocent meal, unlike coarse dinner or supper, mingled harmoniously with the scene, with the balmy air, the blue sky, and the bright emerald grass sprinkled with gold by the descending sun. Farmer Merton soon left them, and then Susan went in and brought out pen and ink and a large sheet of paper.

Susan sat apart working with her needle, Mr. Eden sketched a sermon and sipped his tea, and now and then purred three words to Susan, who purred as many in reply. And yet over this pleasant scene there hung a gentle sadness, felt most by Susan as with head bent down she plied her needle in silence. "He will not sit in my garden many times more, nor write many more notes of sermons under my eye, nor preach to us all many more sermons; and then he is going to a nasty gaol, where he won't have his health I'm doubtful. And then I'm fearful he

won't be comfortable in his house, with nobody to take care of him that really cares for him; servants soon find out where there is no woman to scold them as should be, and he is not the man to take his own part against them." And Susan sighed at the domestic prospects of her friend, and her needle went slower and slower.

These reflections were interrupted by the servant, who announced a visitor. Susan laid down her work and went into the parlour, and there found Isaac Levi. She greeted him with open arms and heightened color, and never for a moment suspected that he was come there full of suspicions of her.

After the first greeting a few things of little importance were said on either side. Isaac watching to see whether Mr. Meadows had succeeded in supplanting George, and too cunning to lead the conversation that way himself, lay patiently in wait like a sly old fox. However, he soon found he was playing the politician superfluously, for Susan laid bare her whole heart to the simplest capacity. Instead of waiting for the skilful, subtle, almost invisible cross-examination, which the descendant of Maimonides was preparing for her, she answered all his questions before they were asked. It came out that her thought by day and night was George, that she had been very dull, and very unhappy. "But I am better now, Mr. Levi, thank God: He has been very good to me. He has sent me a friend, a clergyman, or an angel in the dress of one I sometimes think. He knows all about me and George, sir; so that makes me feel quite at home with him, and I can — and now Mr. Meadows stops an hour on market days, and he is so kind as to tell me all about Australia, and you may guess I like to hear about — Mr. Levi, come and see us some market evening. Mr. Meadows is capital company; to hear him you would think he had passed half his life in Australia. Were you ever in Australia, sir, if you please?"

"Never, but I shall."

"Shall you, sir?"

"Yes; the old Jew is not to die till he has drifted to every

part in the globe. In my old days I shall go back towards the East, and there methinks I shall lay these wandering bones."

"Oh, sir, inquire after George and show him some kindness, and don't see him wronged, he is very simple — No! no! no! you are too old; you must not cross the seas at your age; don't think of it; stay quiet at home till you leave us for a better world."

"At home!" said the old man sorrowfully; "I have no home. I had a home, but the man Meadows has driven me out of it."

"Mr. Meadows! La, sir, as how?"

"He bought the house I live in, and next Lady-day, as the woman-worshipper calls it, he turns me to the door."

"But he won't if you ask him. He is a very good-natured man. You go and ask him to be so good as let you stay; he won't gainsay you, you take my word."

"Susannah!" replied Isaac, "you are good, and innocent; you cannot fathom the hearts of the wicked. This Meadows is a man of Belial. I did beseech him; I bowed these grey hairs to him, to let me stay in the house where I lived so happily with my Leah twenty years, where my children were born to me and died from me, where my Leah consoled me for their loss awhile, but took no comfort herself and left me too."

"Poor old man! and what did he say?"

"He refused me with harsh words. To make the refusal more bitter he insulted my religion and my much-enduring tribe, and at the day appointed he turns me at three-score years and ten adrift upon the earth."

"Eh! dear! how hard the world is!" cried Susan; "I had a great respect for Mr. Meadows, but now if he comes here I know I shall shut the door in his face."

Isaac reflected. This would not have suited a certain subtle Eastern plan of vengeance he had formed. "No!" said he, "that is folly. Take not another man's quarrel on your shoulders. A Jew knows how to revenge himself without your aid."

So then her inquisitor was satisfied; Australia really was the topic that made Meadows welcome: he departed, revolving oriental vengeance.

Smooth Meadows at his next visit removed the impression excited against him, and easily persuaded Susan that Levi was more in the wrong than he; in which opinion she stood firm till Levi's next visit.

At last she gave up all hope of dijudicating, and determined to end the matter by bringing them together and making them friends.

And now approached the day of Mr. Eden's departure. The last sermon — the last quiet tea in the garden. On Monday afternoon he was to go to Oxford, and the following week to his new sphere of duties, which he had selected to the astonishment of some hundred persons who knew him superficially — knew him by his face, by his pretensions as a scholar, a divine, and a gentleman of descent and independent means, but had not sounded his depths.

All Sunday Susan sought every opportunity of conversing with him even on indifferent matters. She was garnering up his words, his very syllables, and twenty times in the day he saw her eyes fill with tears apropos of such observations as this,

"We shall have a nice warm afternoon, Susan."

"It is to be hoped so, sir; the blackbirds are giving a chirrup or two."

All Monday forenoon Susan was very busy. There was bread to be baked and butter to be made. Mr. Eden must take some of each to Oxford. They would keep Grassmere in his mind a day or two longer; and besides they were wholesome and he was fond of them. Then there was his linen to be looked over, and buttons sewed on for the last time. Then he must eat a good dinner before he went, so then he would want nothing but his tea when he got to Oxford; and the bread would be fit to eat by tea-time, especially a small crusty cake she had made for that purpose. So with all this Susan was energetic, almost lively; and even when it was all done and they were at dinner, her principal anxiety seemed to be that he should eat more than usual because he was going a journey. But when all bustle of every kind was over, and the actual hour of parting came, she suddenly burst out crying before her father and the

servant, who bade her not take on and instantly burst out crying too from vague sympathy.

The old farmer ordered the girl out of the room directly, and without the least emotion proceeded to make excuses to Mr. Eden for Susan.

"A young maid's eyes soon flow over," etc.

Mr. Eden interrupted him.

"Such tears as these do not scald the heart. I feel this separation from my dear kind friend as much as she feels it. But I am more than twice her age, and have passed through — I should feel it bitterly if I thought our friendship and Christian love were to end because our path of duty lies separate. But no, Susan, still look on me as your adviser, your elder brother, and in some measure your pastor. I shall write to you and watch over you, though at some distance — and not so great a distance. I am always well-horsed, and I know you will give me a bed at Grassmere once a quarter."

"That we will," cried the farmer, warmly, "and proud and happy to see you cross the threshold, sir."

"And Mr. Merton, my new house is large. I shall be alone in it. Whenever you and Miss Merton have nothing better to do, pray come and visit me; I will make you as uncomfortable as you have made me comfortable, but as welcome as you have made me welcome."

"We will come, sir! we will come some one of these days, and thank you for the honor."

So Mr. Eden went from Grassmere village and Grassmere farm-house — but he left neither as he found them; fifty years hence an old man and woman or two will speak to their grandchildren of "the Sower," and Susan Merton (if she is on earth then), of "the good Physician." She may well do so, for it was no vulgar service he rendered her — no vulgar malady he checked.

Not every good man could have penetrated so quickly a coy woman's grief, nor, the wound found, have soothed her fever and deadened her smart with a hand as firm as gentle as gentle as firm.

Such men are human suns! They brighten and warm wherever they pass. Fools count them mad, till death wrenches open foolish eyes; they are not often called "my Lord," * nor sung by poets when they die; but the hearts they heal, and their own, are their rich reward on earth — and their place is high in heaven.

CHAPTER X.

MR. MEADOWS lived in a house that he had conquered three years ago by lending on it at fair interest in his own name. Mr. David Hall, the proprietor, paid neither principal nor interest. Mr. Meadows expected this contingency, and therefore lent his money. He threatened to foreclose, and sell the house under the hammer; to avoid this Mr. Hall said, "Pay yourself the interest by living rent-free in the house till such time as my old aunt dies drat her, and then I'll pay your money, I wish I had never borrowed it." Meadows acquiesced with feigned reluctance. "Well, if I must, I must; but let me have my money as soon as you can" — (aside) "I will end my days in this house."

It had many conveniences; among the rest a very long though narrow garden enclosed within high walls; at the end of the garden was a door, which any body could open from the inside, but from the outside only by a Bramah key.

The access to this part of the premises was by a short, narrow lane, very dirty, and very little used, because, whatever might have been in old times, it led now from nowhere to nowhere. Meadows received by this entrance one or two persons whom he never allowed to desecrate his knocker. At the head of these furtive visitors was Peter Crawley, attorney-at-law, a gentleman who every New Year's Eve used to say to himself with a look of gratified amazement — "Another year gone, and I not struck off the Rolls!!!"

Peter had a Bramah key intrusted to him.

* Sometimes though.

His visits to Mr. Meadows were conducted thus: he opened the garden-gate, and looked up at the window in a certain passage. This passage was not accessible to the servants, and the window with its blinds was a signal book.

Blinds up, Mr. Meadows out.

White blind down, Mr. Meadows in.

Blue blind down, Mr. Meadows in, but not alone.

The same key that opened the garden door opened a door at the back of the house, which led direct to the passage above-mentioned. On the window-seat lay a peculiar whistle constructed to imitate the whining of a dog. Then Meadows would go to his book-shelves, which lined one side of the room, and pressing a hidden spring open a door that nobody ever suspected, for the books came along with it. To provide for every contingency, there was a small secret opening in another part of the shelves, by which Meadows could shoot unobserved a note or the like into the passage, and so give Crawley instructions without dismissing a visitor, if he had one.

Meadows provided against surprises and discovery. His study had double doors: neither of them could be opened from the outside. His visitors or servants must rap with an iron knocker; and whilst Meadows went to open, the secret visitor stepped into the passage, and shut the books behind him.

It was a room that looked business. One side was almost papered with ordnance maps of this and an adjoining county. Pigeon-holes abounded too, and there was a desk six feet long, chock full of little drawers — contents indicated outside in letters of which the proprietor knew the meaning, not I.

Between the door and the fire-place was a screen, on which, in place of idle pictures, might be seen his plans and calculations as a land surveyor, especially those that happened to be at present in operation or under consideration. So he kept his business before his eye, on the chance of a good idea striking him at a leisure moment.

"Will Fielding's acceptance falls due to-morrow, Crawley.

"Yes, sir, what shall I do."

"Present it; he is not ready for it I know."

"Well, sir, what next."

"Serve him with a writ."

"He will be preciously put about."

"He will. Seem sorry, say you are a little short, but won't trouble him for a month, if it is inconvenient; but he must make you safe by signing a judgment."

"Ay! ay! Sir, may I make bold to ask what is the game with this young Fielding?"

"You ought to know the game — to get him in my power."

"And a very good game it is, sir! Nobody plays it better than you. He won't be the only one that is in your power in these parts — he! he!" And Crawley chuckled without merriment. "Excuse my curiosity, sir, but when about is the blow to fall?"

"What is that to you?"

"Nothing, sir, only the sooner the better. I have a grudge against the family."

"Have you? then don't act upon it. I don't employ you to do your business, but mine."

"Certainly, Mr. Meadows. You don't think I'd be so ungrateful as to spoil your admirable plans by acting upon any little feeling of my own."

"I don't think you would be so silly. For if you did, we should part."

"Don't mention such an event, sir."

"You have been drinking, Crawley!"

"Not a drop, sir, this two days."

"You are a liar! The smell of it comes through your skin. I won't have it. Do you hear what I say? I won't have it. No man that drinks can do business — especially mine."

"I'll never touch a drop again. They called me into the public-house — they wouldn't take a denial."

"Hold your prate, and listen to me. The next time you look at a public-house, say to yourself, Peter Crawley, that is not a public-house to you — it is a hospital, a workhouse, or a dunghill — for if you go in there, John Meadows, that is your friend, will be your enemy."

"Heaven forbid, Mr. Meadows."

"Drink this basin-full of coffee."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. It is very bitter."

"Is your head clear now?"

"As a bell."

"Then go and do my work, and don't do an atom more or an atom less than your task."

"No, sir. Oh, Mr. Meadows! it is a pleasure to serve you. You are as deep as the sea, sir, and as firm as the rock. You never drink, nor anything else, that I can find. A man out of a thousand! No little weakness, like the rest of us, sir. You are a great man, sir. You are a model of a man of bus —"

"Good morning," growled Meadows roughly, and turned his back.

"Good morning, sir," said Peter mellifluously. And opening the back door about ten inches, he wriggled out like a weasel going through a chink in a wall.

William Fielding fell like a child into the trap. "Give me time, and it will be all right," is the debtor's delusion. William thanked Crawley for not pressing him, and so compelling him to force a sale of all his hogs, fat or lean. Crawley received his thanks with a leer, returned in four days, got the judgment signed, and wriggled away with it to Meadows' back door.

"You take out an arrest" — Meadows gave him a pocket-book — "put it in this, and keep it ready in your pocket night and day."

"I dare say it will come into use before the year is out, sir."

"I hope not."

George Fielding gone to Australia, to make a thousand pounds by farming and cattle-feeding, that so he may claim old Merton's promised consent to marry Susan: Susan observing Mr. Eden's precepts even more religiously than when he was with her; active, full of charitable deeds, often pensive, always anxious, but not despondent now, thanks to the good physician: Meadows falling deeper and deeper in love, but keeping it more jealously secret than ever; on his guard against Isaac, on his guard against William, on his guard against John Meadows;

hoping everything from time and accidents, from the distance between the lovers, from George's incapacity, of which he had a great opinion — "He will never make a thousand pence," — but not trusting to the things he hoped; on the contrary, watching with keen eye, and working with subtle threads to draw everybody into his power who could assist or thwart him in the object his deep heart and iron will were set on: William Fielding going down the hill Meadows was mounting; getting the better of his passion, and substituting, by degrees, a brother-in-law's regard.

Flowers and weeds have one thing in common — while they live they grow. Natural growth is a slow process, to describe it day by day a slower. For the next four months matters glided so quietly on the slopes I have just indicated, that an intelligent calculation by the reader may very well take the place of a tedious chronicle by the writer. Moreover, the same monotony did not hang over every part of our story. These very four months were eventful enough to one of our characters; and through him, by subtle but positive links, to every man and every woman who fills any considerable position in this matter-of-fact romance. Therefore our story drags us from the meadows round Grassmere to a massive castellated building, glaring red brick with white stone corners. These colours and their contrast relieve the stately mass of some of that grimness which characterizes the castles of antiquity; but enough remains to strike some awe into the beholder.

Two round towers flank the principal entrance. On one side of the right-hand tower is a small house constructed in the same style as the grand pile. The castle is massive and grand: this, its satellite, is massive and tiny, like the frog doing his little bit of bull, — like Signor Hervio Nano, a tremendous thick dwarf now no more. There is one dimple to all this gloomy grandeur: a rich little flower-garden, whose frame of emerald turf goes smiling up to the very ankle of the frowning fortress, as some few happy lakes in the world wash the very foot of the mountains that hem them. From this green spot a few flowers look up with bright and wondering wide-open eyes at the great bul-

lying masonry over their heads; and to the spectator of both, these sparks of colour at the castle-foot are dazzling and charming; they are like rubies, sapphires, and pink topaz, in some uncouth angular ancient setting.

Between the central towers is a sharp arch, filled by a huge oak door of the same shape and size, which, for further security or ornament, is closely studded with large diamond-headed nails. A man with keys at his girdle like the ancient housewives, opens the huge door to you with slight effort, so well oiled is it. You slip under a porch into an enclosed yard, the great door shuts almost of itself, and now it depends upon the housewifely man whether you ever see the vain, idle, and every way objectionable world again.

Passing into the interior of the vast building, you find yourself in an extensive aisle traversed at right angles by another of similar dimensions, the whole in form of a cross. In the centre of each aisle is an iron staircase, so narrow that two people cannot pass, and so light and open that it merely ornaments, not obstructs, the view of the aisle. These staircases make two springs; the first takes them to the level of two corridors on the first floor. Here there is a horizontal space of about a yard, whence the continuation staircase rises to the second and highest floor. This gives three corridors, all studded with doors opening on small separate apartments, whereof anon.

Nearly all the inmates of this grim palace wear a peculiar costume and disguise, one feature of which is a cap of coarse materials, with a vizor to it, which conceals the features all but the chin and the eyes, which last peep, in a very droll way, through two holes cut for that purpose.

They are distinguished by a courteous manner to strangers, whom they never fail to salute in passing, with great apparent cordiality; indeed, we fear we shall never meet in the busy world with such uniform urbanity as in this and similiar retreats. It arises from two causes: one is that here strangers are welcome from their rarity; another, that politeness is a part of the education of the place, which, besides its other uses, is

an adult school of manners, morals, religion, grammar, writing, and cobbling.

With the exception of its halls and corridors, the building is almost entirely divided into an immense number of the small apartments noticed above. These are homely inside, but exquisitely clean. The furniture, moveable and fixed, none of which is superfluous, can be briefly described: — A bedstead, consisting of the side walls of the apartment; polished steel staples are fixed in these walls, two on each side the apartment at an elevation of about two feet and a half. The occupant's mattress (made of cocoa bark) has two stout steel hooks at each end; these are hooked into the staples, and so he lies across his abode. A deal table the size of a pocket-handkerchief; also a deal tripod. A water-spout so ingeniously contrived, that, turned to the right, it sends a small stream into a copper basin, and to the left, into a bottomless close stool at some distance. A small gas-pipe tipped with polished brass. In one angle of the wall a sort of commode, or open cupboard, on whose shelves a bright pewter plate, a knife and fork, and a wooden spoon: in a drawer of this commode yellow soap and a comb and brush. A grating down low for hot air to come in, if it likes, and another up high for foul air to go out, if it chooses. On the wall a large placard containing rules for the tenant's direction, and smaller placards containing texts from Scripture, the propriety of returning thanks after food, &c.; a slate, and a couple of leathern knee guards used in polishing the room. And that is all. But the deal furniture is so clean you might eat off it. The walls are snow, the copper basin and the brass gas-pipe glitter like red gold and pale gold, and the bed hooks like silver hot from the furnace. Altogether it is inviting at first sight.

To one of these snowy snug retreats was now ushered an acquaintance of ours, Tom Robinson. A brief retrospect must dispose of his intermediate history.

When he left us he went to the county bridewell, where he remained until the assizes, an interval of about a month.. He was tried; direct evidence was strong against him, and he defended himself with so much ingenuity and sleight of intellect,

that the jury could not doubt his sleight of hand and morals too. He was found guilty, identified as a notorious thief, and condemned to twelve months' imprisonment and ten years' transportation. He returned to the county bridewell for a few days, and then was shifted to the castellated building.

Tom Robinson had not been in gaol this four years, and, since his last visit, great changes had begun to take place in the internal economy of these skeleton palaces, and in the treatment of their prisoners.

Prisons might be said to be in a transition state. In some, as in the county bridewell Robinson had just left, the old system prevailed in full force. The two systems vary in their aims. Under the old gaol was a finishing school of felony and petty larceny. Under the new it is intended to be a penal hospital for diseased and contagious souls.

The treatment of prisoners is not at present invariable. Within certain limits the law unwisely allows a discretionary power to the magistrates of the county where the gaol is; and the gaoler, or, as he is now called, the governor, is their agent in these particulars.

Hence, in some new gaols you may now see the non-separate system; in others, the separate system without silence; in others, the separate and silent system; in others, a mixture of these, *i. e.*, the hardened offenders kept separate, the improving ones allowed to mix; and these varieties are at the discretion of the magistrates, who settle within the legal limits each gaol's system.

The magistrates, in this part of their business, are represented by certain of their own body, who are called "the visiting justices;" and these visiting justices can even order and authorize a gaoler to flog a prisoner for offences committed in gaol.

Now, a year or two before our tale, one Captain O'Connor was governor of this gaol. Captain O'Connor was a man of great public merit. He had been one of the first dissatisfied with the old system, and had written very intelligent books on crime and punishment, which are supposed to have done their

share in opening the nation's eyes to the necessity of regenerating its prisons. But after a while the visiting justices of this particular county became dissatisfied with him; he did not go far enough nor fast enough with the stone he had helped to roll. Books and reports came out which convinced the magistrates that severe punishment of mind and body was the essential object of a gaol, and that it was wrong and chimerical to attempt any cures by any other means.

Captain O'Connor had been very successful by other means, and could not quite come to this opinion; but he had a deputy-governor who did. System, when it takes a hold of the mind, takes a strong hold, and the men of system became very impatient of opposition, and grateful for thorough acquiescence.

Hence it came to pass that in the course of a few months Captain O'Connor found himself in an uncomfortable position. His deputy-governor, Mr. Hawes, enjoyed the confidence of the visiting justices, he did not. His suggestions were negatived; Hawes's accepted. And to tell the truth, he became at last useless as well as uncomfortable; for these gentlemen were determined to carry out their system, and had a willing agent in the prison. O'Connor was little more than a drag on the wheel he could not hinder from gliding down the hill. At last, it happened that he had overdrawn his account, without clearly stating at the time that the sum, which amounted nearly to one hundred pounds, was taken by him as an accommodation, or advance of salary. This, which though by no means unprecedented, was an unbusiness-like though innocent omission, justified censure.

The magistrates went farther than censure; they had long been looking for an excuse to get rid of him, and avail themselves of the zeal and energy of Hawes. They therefore removed O'Connor, stating publicly as their reason that he was old; and their interest put Hawes into his place. There was something melancholy in such a close to O'Connor's public career. Fortune used him hardly. He had been one of the first to improve prisons, yet he was dismissed on this or that pretence, but really because he could not keep pace with the soi-

disant improvements of three inexperienced persons. Honorable mention of his name, his doings, and his words, is scattered about various respectable works by respectable men of this subject, yet he ended in something very like discredit.

However, the public gained this by the injustice done him — that an important experiment was tried under an active and willing agent.

With Governor Hawes the separate and silent system flourished in — Gaol.

The justices and the new governor were of one mind. They had been working together about two years when Robinson came into the gaol.

During this period three justices had periodically visited the gaol, perused the reports, examined, as in duty bound the surgeon, the officers, and prisoners, and were proud of the system and its practical working here.

With respect to Hawes the governor, their opinion of him was best shown in the reports they had to make to the Home Office from time to time. In these they invariably spoke of him as an active, zealous, and deserving officer.

Robinson had heard much of the changes in gaol treatment, but they had not yet come home to him; when, therefore, instead of being turned adrift among seventy other spirits as bad as himself, and greeted with their boisterous acclamations, and the friendly pressure of seven or eight felonious hands, he was ushered into a cell white as driven snow, and his housewifely duties explained to him, under a heavy penalty if a speck of dirt should ever be discovered on his little wall, his little floor, his little table, or if his cocoa-bark mattress should not be neatly rolled up after use, and the strap tight, and the steel hook polished like glass, and his little brass gas-pipe glittering like gold, etc., Thomas looked blank and had a misgiving.

"I say guv'nor," said he to the under-turnkey, "how long am I to be here before I go into the yard?"

"Talking not allowed out of hours," was the only reply.

Robinson whistled. The turnkey, whose name was Evans, looked at him with a doubtful air, as much as to say, "Shall I

let that pass unpunished or not?" However, he went out without any further observation, leaving the door open; but the next moment he returned and put his head in: "Prisoners shut their own doors," said he.

"Well!" drawled Robinson, looking coolly and insolently into the man's face, "I don't see what I shall gain by that." And Mr. Robinson seated himself, and turning his back a little rudely, immersed himself ostentatiously in his own thoughts.

"You will gain as you won't be put in the black hole for refractory conduct, No. 19," replied Evans, quietly and sternly.

Robinson made a wry face, and pushed the door peevishly; it shut with a spring, and no mortal power or ingenuity could now open it from the inside.

"Well I'm blest," said the self-immured, "every man his own turnkey now; save the Queen's pocket whatever you do. Times are so hard. Box at the opera costs no end. What have we got here? A Bible!! my eye! invisible print! Oh! I see; 'tisn't for us to read, 'tis for the visitors to admire — like the new sheet over the dirty blankets! What's this hung up?

'GRACE AFTER MEAT.'

"Oh! with all my heart, your reverence! Here, turnkey, fetch up the venison and the sweet sauce — you may leave the water-gruel till I ring for it. If I am to say grace let me feel it first; drat your eyes all round, governor, turnkeys, chaplain, and all the hypocritical crew!"

The next morning, at half-past five, the prison bell rang for the officers to rise, and at six a turnkey unlocked Robinson's door, and delivered the following in an imperious key all in one note and without any rests: — "Prisoner to open and shake bedding wash face hands and neck on pain of punishment and roll up hammocks and clean cells and be ready to clean corridors if required." So chanting — slammed door — vanished.

Robinson sat to work with alacrity upon the little arrangements; he soon finished them, and then he would not have been sorry to turn out and clean the corridor for a change, but it was not his turn. He sat, dull and lonely, till eight o'clock,

when suddenly a key was inserted into a small lock in the centre of his door, but outside; the effect of this was to open a small trap in the door, through this aperture a turnkey shoved in the man's breakfast, without a word, "like one flinging guts to a bear" (Scott); and on the sociable Tom attempting to say a civil word to him, drew the trap sharply back, and hermetically sealed the aperture with a snap. The breakfast was in a round tin, with two compartments; one pint of gruel and six ounces of bread. These two phases of farina were familiar to Mr. Robinson. He ate the bread and drank the gruel, adding a good deal of salt.

At nine the chapel bell rang. Robinson was glad; not that he admired the Liturgy, but he said to himself, "now I shall see a face or two, perhaps some old pals."

To his dismay, the warder who opened his cell bade him at the same time put on the prison cap, with the peak down; and when he and the other male prisoners were mustered in the corridor, he found them all like himself, visor down, eyes glittering like basilisks' or cats' through two holes, features undistinguishable. The word was given to march in perfect silence, five paces apart, to the chapel.

The sullen pageant started.

"I've heard of this, but who'd have thought they carried the game so far; well, I must wait till we are in chapel, and pick up a pal by the voice, whilst the parson is doing his patter."

On reaching the chapel, he found to his dismay that the chapel was as cellular as any other part of the prison; it was an agglomeration of one hundred sentry-boxes, open only on the side facing the clergyman, and even there only from the prisoner's third button upwards. Warders stood on raised platforms, and pointed out his sentry-box to each prisoner with very long slender wands; the prisoner went into it and pulled the door (it shut with a spring), and next took his badge or number from his neck, and hung it up on a nail above his head in the sentry-box. Between the reading-desk and the male prisoners was a small area where the debtors sat together.

The female prisoners were behind a thick veil of close lattice-work.

Service concluded, the governor began to turn a wheel in his pew; this wheel exhibited to the congregation a number, the convict whose number corresponded instantly took down his badge (the sight and position of which had determined the governor in working his wheel), drew the peak of his cap over his face, and went out and waited in the lobby. When all the sentry-boxes were thus emptied, dead march of the whole party back to the main building; here the warders separated them, and sent them dead silent, vizors down, some to clean the prison, some to their cells, some to hard labour, and some to an airing in the yard.

Robinson was to be aired. "Hurrah!" thought sociable Tom. Alas! he found the system in the yard as well as in the chapel. The promenade was a number of passages radiating from a common centre; the sides of passage were thick walls; entrance to passage an iron gate locked behind the promenader. An officer remained on the watch the whole time to see that a word did not creep out or in through one of the gates.

"And this they call out of doors," grunted Robinson.

After an hour's promenade he was taken into his cell, where at twelve the trap in his door was opened and his dinner shoved in and the trap snapped-to again all in three seconds. A very good dinner, better than paupers always get — three ounces of meat — no bone, eight ounces of potatoes, and eight ounces of bread. After dinner three weary hours without an incident. At about three o'clock one of the warders opened his cell door, and put his head in and swiftly withdrew it. Three more monotonous hours, and then supper — one pint of gruel, and eight ounces of bread. He ate it as slowly as he could to eke out a few minutes in the heavy day. Quarter before eight a bell to go to bed. At eight the warders came round, and saw that the prisoners were all in bed. The next day the same thing, and the next ditto, with this exception, that one of the warders came into his cell and minutely examined it in dead silence. The fourth day the chaplain visited him, asked him a few ques-

tions, repeated a few sentences on the moral responsibility of every human being, and set him some texts of Scripture to learn by heart. This visit, though merely one of routine, broke the thief's dead silence and solitude, and he would have been thankful to have a visit every day from the chaplain, whose manner was formal, but not surly and forbidding like the turnkeys or warders.

Next day the governor of the gaol came suddenly into the cell, and put to Robinson several questions, which he answered with great affability; then turning on his heel, said brusquely, "Have you anything to say to me?"

"Yes, sir, if you please."

"Out with it then, my man," said the governor impatiently.

"Sir, I was condemned to hard labour; now I wanted to ask you when my hard labour is to begin, because I have not been put upon anything yet."

"We are kinder to you than the judges then it seems."

"Yes, sir! but I am not naturally lazy, and —"

"A little hard work would amuse you just now."

"Indeed, sir, I think it would; I am very much depressed in spirits."

"You will be worse before you are better."

"Heaven forbid! I think if you don't give me something to do I shall go out of my mind soon, sir."

"That is what they all say! You will be put on hard labour, I promise you, but not when it suits you. We'll choose the time." And the governor went out with a knowing smile upon his face.

The thief sat himself down disconsolately, and the heavy hours, like leaden waves, seemed to rise and rise, and roll over his head and suffocate him, and weigh him down, down, down to bottomless despair.

At length, about the tenth day, this human being's desire to exchange a friendly word with some other human creature became so strong, that in the chapel during service he scratched the door of his sentry box, and whispered, "Mate, whisper me a word for pity's sake." He received no answer; but even to

have spoken himself relieved his swelling soul for a minute or two. Half an hour later four turnkeys came into his cell, and took him down stairs, and confined him in a pitch-dark dungeon.

The prisoner whose attention he had tried to attract in chapel had told to curry favour, and was reported favourably for the same.

The darkness in which Robinson now lay was not like the darkness of our bed-rooms at night, in which the outlines of objects are more or less visible; it was the frightful darkness that chilled and crushed the Egyptians, soul and body; it was a darkness that might be felt.

This terrible and unnatural privation of all light is very trying to all God's creatures, to none more so than to man, and amongst men it is most dangerous and distressing to those who have imagination and excitability. Now Robinson was a man of this class, a man of rare capacity, full of talent and the courage and energy that vent themselves in action, but not rich in the tough fortitude which does little, feels little, and bears much.

When they took him out of the black hole after six hours' confinement, he was observed to be white as a sheet, and to tremble violently all over, and in this state at the word of command he crept back all the way to his cell, his hand to his eyes, that were dazzled by what seemed to him bright day-light, his body shaking, while every now and then a loud convulsive sob burst from his bosom.

The governor happened to be on the corridor, looking down over the rails as Robinson passed him. He said to him, with a victorious sneer, "You won't be refractory in chapel again in a hurry."

"No," said the thief, in a low gentle voice despairingly.

The day after Robinson was put in the black hole the surgeon came his rounds: he found him in a corner of his cell with his eyes fixed on the floor.

The man took no notice of his entrance. The surgeon went

up to him, and shook him rather roughly. Robinson raised his heavy eyes, and looked stupidly at him.

The surgeon laid hold of him, and placing a thumb on each side of his eye, inspected that organ fully. He then felt his pulse; this done, he went out with the warder. Making his report to the governor, he came in turn to Robinson.

"No. 19, is sinking."

"Oh! is he? Fry," (turning to a warder,) "what has 19's treatment been?"

"Been in his cell, sir, without labour since he came. Black-hole yesterday, for communicating in chapel."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Doctor says he is sinking."

"What the devil do you mean by his sinking?"

"Well, sir," replied the surgeon, with a sort of dry deference, "he is dying — that is what I mean."

"Oh, he is dying, is he; d — n him, we'll stop that: here, Fry, take No. 19 out into the garden, and set him to work: and put him on the corridors to-morrow."

"Is he to be let talk to us, sir?"

"Humph! yes!"

Robinson was taken out into the garden; it was a small piece of ground that had once been a yard; it was enclosed within walls of great height, and to us would have seemed a cheerless place for horticulture, but to Robinson it appeared the garden of Eden: he gave a sigh of relief and pleasure, but the next moment his countenance fell.

"They won't let me stay here!"

Fry took him into the centre of the garden, and put a spade into his hand. "Now you dig this piece" said he in his dry unfriendly tone, "and if you have time cut the edges of this grass path square." The words were scarcely out of his mouth, before Robinson drove the spade into the soil with all the energy of one of God's creatures escaping from system back to nature.

Fry left him in the garden after making him pull down his vizor, for there was one more prisoner working at some distance.

Robinson set to with energy, and dug for the bare life. It was a sort of work he knew very little about, and a gardener would have been disgusted at his ridges, but he threw his whole soul into it and very soon had nearly completed his task. Having been confined so long without exercise his breath was short, and he perspired profusely; but he did not care for that "Oh, how sweet this is after being buried alive," cried he, and in went the spade again. Presently he was seized with a strong desire to try the other part of his task, the more so as it required more skill and presented a difficulty to overcome. A part of the path had been shaved, and the knippers lay where they had been last used. Robinson inspected the recent work with an intelligent eye, and soon discovered traces of a white line on one side of the path, that had served as a guide to the knippers. "Oh! I must draw a straight line," said Robinson, out loud, indulging himself with the sound of a human voice: "but how? can you tell me that," he inquired of a gooseberry bush that grew near. The words were hardly out of his mouth before peering about in every direction he discovered an iron spike with some cord wrapped round it and, not far off, a piece of chalk. He pounced on them, and fastening the spike at the edge of the path attempted to draw a line with the chalk using the string as a ruler. Not succeeding he reflected a little, and the result was that he chalked several feet of the line all round until it was all white; then with the help of a stake, which he took for his other terminus, he got the chalked string into a straight line just above the edge of the grass: next pressing it tightly down with his foot, he effected a white line on the grass: he now removed the string, took the knippers, and following his white line, trimmed the path secundum artem. "There," said Robinson, to the gooseberry-bush but not very loud for fear of being heard and punished, "I wonder whether that is how the gardeners do it. I think it must be." He viewed his work with satisfaction, then went back to his digging, and as he put the finishing stroke Fry came to bring him back to his cell; it was bed-time.

"I never worked in a garden before," began Robinson, "so

it is not so well done as it might be, but if I was to come every day for a week, I think I could master it. I did not know there was a garden in this prison. If ever I build a prison there shall be a garden in it as big as Belgrave Square."

"You are precious fond of the sound of your own voice, No. 19," said Fry drily.

"We are not forbidden to speak to the warders are we?"

"Not at proper times."

He threw open cell-door 19 and Robinson entered.

Before he could close the door Robinson said "Good night and thank you."

"G'night," snarled Fry sullenly, as one shamed against his will into a civility.

Robinson lay awake half the night and awoke the next morning rather feverish and stiff, but not the leaden thing he was the day before.

A feather turns a balanced scale. This man's life and reason had been engaged in a drawn battle with three mortal enemies — solitude, silence, and privation of all employment. That little bit of labour and wholesome thought, whose paltry and childish details I half blush to have given you, were yet due to my story, for they took a man out of himself, checked the self-devouring process, and helped elastic nature to recover herself this bout.

The next day Robinson was employed washing the prison. The next he got two hours in the garden again, and the next the trades'-master was sent into his cell to teach him how to make scrubbing-brushes. The man sat down and was commencing a discourse when Robinson interrupted him politely.

"Sir, let me see you work, and watch me try to do the same, and correct me."

"With all my heart," said the trades'-master.

He remained about half an hour with his pupil, and when he went out, he said to one of the turnkeys, "There is a chap in there that can pick up a handicraft as a pigeon picks up peas."

The next day the surgeon happened to look in. He found

Robinson as busy as a bee making brushes, pulled his eye open again, felt his pulse, and wrote something down in his memorandum-book. He left directions with the turnkey that No. 19 should be kept employed, with the governor's permission.

Robinson's hands were now full; he made brushes, and every day put some of them to the test upon the floor and walls of the building.

It happened one day as he was doing housemaid in corridor B, that he suddenly heard unwonted sounds issue from a part of the premises into which he had not yet been introduced, the yard devoted to hard labour. First he heard a single voice shouting; that did not last long; then a dead silence; then several voices, among which his quick ear recognised Fry's and the governor's. He could see nothing; the sounds came from one of the hard-labour cells. Robinson was surprised and puzzled; what were these sounds that broke the silence of the living tomb? An instinct told him it was no use asking a turnkey, so he devoured his curiosity and surprise as best he might.

The very next day, about the same hour, both were again excited by noises from the same quarter equally unintelligible. He heard a great noise of water slashed in bucketsful against a wall, and this was followed by a sort of gurgling that seemed to him to come from a human throat; this latter, however, was almost drowned in an exulting chuckle of several persons, amongst whom he caught the tones of a turnkey called Hodges and of the governor himself. Robinson puzzled and puzzled himself, but could not understand these curious sounds, and he could see nothing except a quantity of water running out of one of the labour cells, and coursing along till it escaped by one of the two gutters that drained the yard. Often and often Robinson meditated on this, and exerted all his ingenuity to conceive what it meant. His previous gaol experience afforded him no clue, and as he was one of those who hate to be in the dark about anything this new riddle tortured him.

However, the prison was generally so dead dumb and gloomy, that, upon two such cheerful events as water splashing

and creatures laughing, he could not help crowing a little out of sympathy without knowing why.

The next day as Robinson was working in the corridor the governor came in with a gentleman whom he treated with unusual and marked respect. This gentleman was the chairman of the quarter-sessions, and one of those magistrates who had favoured the adoption of the present system.

Mr. Williams inspected the prison; was justly pleased with its exquisite cleanness; he questioned the governor as to the health of the prisoners, and received for answer that most of them were well, but that there were some exceptions; this appeared to satisfy him. He went into the labor-yard, looked at the cranks, examined the numbers printed on each in order to learn their respective weights, and see that the prisoners were not overburdened.

Went with the governor into three or four cells, and asked the prisoners if they had any complaint to make.

The unanimous answer was "No!"

He then complimented the governor — and drove home to his own house, Ashtown Park.

There after dinner he said to a brother magistrate, "I inspected the gaol to-day; was all over it."

The next morning Fry the morose came into Robinson's cell with a more cheerful countenance than usual. Robinson noticed it.

"You are put on the crank," said Fry.

"Oh! am I?"

"Of course you are. Your sentence was hard labour, wasn't it? I don't know why you weren't sent on a fortnight ago."

Fry then took him out into the labor-yard, which he found perforated with cells about half the size of his hermitage in the corridor. In each of these little quiet grottoes lurked a monster, called a crank. A crank is a machine of this sort — there springs out of a vertical post an iron handle, which the workman taking it by both hands works round and round as in some country places you may have seen the villagers draw a bucket

up from a well. This iron handle goes at the shoulder into a small iron box at the top of the post; and inside that box the resistance to the turner is regulated by the manufacturer, who states the value of the resistance outside in cast-iron letters. Thus —

5 lb. crank.
7 lb. crank. 10, 12, etc., etc.

"Eighteen hundred revolutions per hour," said Mr. Fry in his voice of routine, and "you are to work two hours before dinner." So saying he left him, and Robinson with fear of punishment before him lost not a moment in getting to work. He found the crank go easy enough at first, but the longer he was at it the stiffer it seemed to turn. And after about four hundred turns he was fain to breathe and rest himself. He took three minutes rest, then at it again. All this time there was no taskmaster, as in Egypt, nor whipper up of declining sable energy, as in Old Kentucky. So that if I am so fortunate as to have a reader aged ten, he is wondering why the fool did not confine his exertions to *saying* he had made the turns. My dear, it would not do. Though no mortal oversaw the thief at his task, the eye of science was in that cell and watched every stroke and her inexorable finger marked it down. In plain English, on the face of the machine was a thing like a chronometer with numbers set all round and a hand which, somehow or other, always pointed to the exact number of turns the thief had made. The crank was an autometer, or self-measurer, and in that respect your superior and mine, my little drake.

This was Robinson's first acquaintance with the crank. The tread-wheel had been the mode in his time; so by the time he had made three thousand turns, he was rather exhausted. He leaned upon the iron handle, and sadly regretted his garden and his brushes; but fear and dire necessity were upon him; he set to his task and to work again. "I won't look at the meter again, for it always tells me less than I expect. I'll just plough on till that beggar comes. I know he will come to the minute."

Sadly and doggedly he turned the iron handle, and turned and turned again; and then he panted and rested a minute, and

then doggedly to his idle toil again. He was now so fatigued that his head seemed to have come loose, he could not hold it up, and it went round and round and round with the crank-handle. Hence it was that Mr. Fry stood at the mouth of the den without the other seeing him. "Halt," said Fry. Robinson looked up, and there was the turnkey inspecting him with a discontented air. "I'm done," thought Robinson, "here he is as black as thunder — the number not right no doubt."

"What are ye at," growled Fry. "You are forty over," and the said Fry looked not only ill-used, but a little unhappy. Robinson's good behaviour had disappointed the poor soul.

This Fry was a grim oddity; he experienced a feeble complacency when things went wrong — but never else.

The thief exulted, and was taken back to his cell. Dinner came almost immediately; four ounces of meat instead of three; two ounces less bread, but a large access of potatoes, which more than balanced the account.

The next day Robinson was put on the crank again, but not till the afternoon. He had finished about half his task, when he heard at some little distance from him a faint moaning. His first impulse was to run out of his cell, and see what was the matter, but Hodges and Fry were both in the yard, and he knew that they would report him for punishment upon the least breach of discipline. So he turned and turned the crank, with these moans ringing in his ears, and perplexing his soul.

Finding they did not cease, he peeped cautiously into the yard, and there he saw the governor himself as well as Hodges and Fry: all three were standing close to the place whence these groans issued and with an air of complete unconcern.

But presently the groans ceased, and then mysteriously enough the little group of disciplinarians threw off their apathy. Hodges and Fry went hastily to the pump with buckets, which they filled, and then came back to the governor; the next minute Robinson heard water dashed repeatedly against the walls of the cell, and then the governor laughed, and Hodges laughed, and even the gloomy Fry vented a brief grim chuckle.

And now Robinson quivered with curiosity as he turned his crank, but there was no means of gratifying it. It so happened, however, that some ten minutes later the governor sent Hodges and Fry to another part of the prison, and they had not been gone long, before a message came to himself, on which he went hastily out, and the yard was left empty. Robinson's curiosity had reached such a pitch, that notwithstanding the risk he ran, for he knew the governor would send back to the yard the very first disengaged officer he met, he could not stay quiet. As the governor closed the gate he ran with all speed to the cell, he darted in, and then the thief saw what made the three honest men laugh so. He saw it, and started back with a cry of dismay, for the sight chilled the felon to the bone.

A lad about fifteen years of age was pinned against the wall in agony by a leathern belt passed round his shoulders and drawn violently round two staples in the wall. His arms were jammed against his sides by a strait waistcoat fastened with straps behind, and those straps drawn with the utmost severity. But this was not all. A high leathern collar a quarter of an inch thick squeezed his throat in its iron grasp. His hair and his clothes were drenched with water which had been thrown in bucketsful over him, and now dripped from him on the floor. His face was white, his lips livid, his eyes were nearly glazed, and his teeth chattered with cold and pain.

A more unprincipled man than Robinson did not exist; but burglary and larceny do not extinguish humanity in a thinking rascal, as resigning the soul to system can extinguish it in a dull dog.

"Oh, what is this!" cried Robinson, "what are the villains doing to you?"

He received no answer; but the boy's eyes opened wide, and he turned those glazing eyes, the only part of his body he could turn towards the speaker. Robinson ran up to him, and began to try and loosen him.

At this the boy cried out, almost screaming with terror, "Let me alone! let me alone! They'll give it me worse if you do, and they'll serve you out too!"

"But you will die, boy. Look at his poor lips!"

"No, no, no! I shan't die! No such luck!" cried the boy impatiently and wildly. "Thank you for speaking kind to me. Who are you? tell me quick, and go. I am — Josephs, No. 15, Corridor A."

"I am Robinson, No. 19, Corridor B."

"Good-bye, Robinson, I shan't forget you. Hark, the door! Go! go! go! go! go!"

Robinson was already gone. He had fled at the first click of a key in the outward door, and darted into his cell at the moment Fry got into the yard. An instinct of suspicion led this man straight to Robinson's hermitage. He found him hard at work. Fry scrutinized his countenance, but Robinson was too good an actor to betray himself; only when Fry passed on he drew a long breath. What he had seen surprised as well as alarmed him, for he had always been told the new system discouraged personal violence of all sorts; and in all his experience of the old gaols he had never seen a prisoner abused so savagely as the young martyr in the adjoining cell. His own work done, he left for his own dormitory. He was uneasy, and his heart was heavy for poor Josephs, but he dared not even cast a look towards his place of torture, for the other executioners had returned, and Fry followed grim at his heels like a mastiff dogging a stranger out of the premises.

That evening Robinson spent in gloomy reflections and forebodings. "I wish I was in the hulks, or anywhere out of this place," said he. As for Josephs, the governor, after inspecting his torture for a few minutes, left the yard again with his subordinates, and Josephs was left alone with his great torture for two hours more; then Hodges came in, and began to loose him, swearing at him all the time for a little rebellious monkey that gave more trouble than enough. The rebellious monkey made no answer, but crawled slowly away to his dungeon, shivering in his drenched clothes, stiff and sore, his bones full of pain, his heart full of despondency.

Robinson had now eight thousand turns of the crank per day, and very hard work he found it; but he preferred it to

being buried alive all day in his cell; and warned by Josephs' fate, he went at the crank with all his soul, and never gave them an excuse for calling him "refractory." It happened, however, one day just after breakfast, that he was taken with a headache and shivering; and not getting better after chapel, but rather worse, he rang his bell and begged to see the surgeon. The surgeon ought to have been in the gaol at this hour: he was not though, and as he had been the day before, and was accustomed to neglect the prisoners for any one who paid better, he was not expected this day. Soon after Fry came to the cell and ordered Robinson out to the crank. Robinson told him he was too ill to work.

"I must have the surgeon's authority for that, before I listen to it," replied Fry amateur of routine.

"But he is not in gaol, or you would have it."

"Then he ought to be."

"Well, is it my fault he's shirking his duty? Send for him, and you'll see he will tell you I am not fit for the crank to-day; my head is splitting."

"Come, no gammon, No. 19; it is the crank or the jacket, or else the black hole. So take which you like best."

Robinson rose with a groan of pain and despondency.

"It is only eight thousand words you have got to say to it, and that is not many for such a tongue as yours."

At the end of the time Fry came to the mouth of the labour-cell with a grim chuckle: "He will never have done his number this time." He found Robinson kneeling on the ground, almost insensible, the crank-handle convulsively grasped in his hands. Fry's first glance was at this figure, that a painter might have taken for a picture of labour overtasked; but this was neither new nor interesting to Fry. He went eagerly to examine the meter of the crank — there lay his heart, such as it was — and to his sorrow he found that No. 19 had done his work before he broke down. What it cost the poor fever-stricken wretch to do it can easier be imagined than described.

They assisted Robinson to his cell, and that night he was in a burning fever. The next day the surgeon happened by some

accident to be at his post, and prescribed change of diet and medicines for him. "He would be better in the infirmary."

"Why?" said the governor.

"More air."

"Nonsense, there is plenty of air here; there is a constant stream of air comes in through this," and he pointed to a revolving cylinder in the window constructed for that purpose.

"You give him the right stuff doctor," said Hawes jocosely "and he won't slip his wind this time."

The surgeon acquiesced according to custom.

It was not for him to contradict Hawes, who allowed him to attend the gaol or neglect it according to his convenience, *i. e.*, to come three or four times a week at different hours, instead of twice every day at fixed hours.

It was two days after this that the governor saw Hodges come out of a cell, laughing.

"What are ye grinning at?" said he in his amiable way.

"No. 19 is light-headed, sir, and I have been listening to him. It would make a cat laugh," said Hodges apologetically. He knew well enough the governor did not approve of laughing in the gaol.

The governor said nothing, but made a motion with his hand, and Hodges opened cell 19 and they both went in.

No. 19 lay on his back flushed and restless with his eyes fixed on vacancy. He was talking incessantly and without sequence. I should fail signally, were I to attempt to transfer his words to paper. I feel my weakness and the strength of others who in my day have shown a singular power of fixing on paper the volatile particles of frenzy; however, in a word, the poor thief was talking as our poetasters write, and amidst his gunpowder, daffodils, bosh, and other constellations, there mingled gleams of sense and feeling that would have made you and me very sad.

He often recurred to a girl he called Mary, and said a few gentle words to her; then off again into the wildest flights. While Mr. Hawes and his myrmidons were laughing at him, he suddenly fixed his eyes on some imaginary figure on the oppo-

site wall, and began to cry out loudly, "Take him down. Don't you see you are killing him! The collar is choking him! See how white he is! His eyes stare! The boy will die! Murder! murder! murder! I can't bear to see him die." And with these words he buried his head in the bed-clothes.

Mr. Hawes looked at Mr. Fry; Mr. Fry answered the look; "He must have seen Josephs the other day."

"Ay! he is mighty curious. Well, when he gets well!" and, shaking his fist at the sufferer, Mr. Hawes went out of the cell soon after.

CHAPTER XI.

"WHAT is your report about No. 19, doctor?"

"The fever is gone."

"He is well, then?"

"He is well of the fever, but a fever leaves the patient in a state of debility for some days. I have ordered him meat twice a-day, — that is meat once and soup once."

"Then you report him cured of his fever?"

"Certainly."

"Hodges, put No. 19 on the crank."

"Yes, sir."

Even the surgeon opened his eyes at this. "Why, he is as weak as a child," said he.

"Will it kill him?"

"Certainly not; and for the best of all reasons. He can't possibly do it."

"You don't know what these fellows can do when they are forced."

The surgeon shrugged his shoulders and passed on to his other patients. Robinson was taken out into the yard. "What a blessing the fresh air is!" said he, gulping in the atmosphere of the yard. "I should have got well long ago if I had not been stifled in my cell for want of room and air."

Robinson went to the crank in good spirits; he did not know how weak he was till he began to work; but he soon found out

he could not do the task in the time. He thought therefore the wisest plan would be not to exhaust himself in vain efforts, and he sat quietly down and did nothing. In this posture he was found by Hawes and his myrmidons.

"What are you doing there not working?"

"Sir I am only just getting well of a fever, and I am as weak as water."

"And that is why you are not trying to do anything, eh?"

"I have tried, sir, and it is impossible. I am not fit to turn this heavy crank."

"Well, then, I must try if I can't make you. Fetch the jacket."

"Oh! for heaven's sake don't torture me, sir. There is nobody more willing to work than I am. And if you will but give me a day or two to get my strength after the fever, you shall see how I will work."

"There! there! —— your palaver! Strap him up."

He was in no condition to resist and moreover knew resistance was useless. They jammed him in the jacket, pinned him tight to the wall, and throttled him in the collar. This collar, by a refinement of cruelty, was made with unbound edges, so that when the victim, exhausted with the cruel cramp that racked his aching bones in the fierce gripe of Hawes's infernal machine, sank his heavy head and drooped his chin, the jagged collar sawed him directly and lacerating the flesh drove him away from even this miserable approach to ease. Robinson had formed no idea of the torture. The victims of the Inquisition would have gained but little by becoming the victims of the separate and silent system in —— gaol.

They left the poor fellow pinned to the wall, jammed in the strait waistcoat, and throttled in the round saw. Weakened by fever and unnatural exertion, he succumbed sooner than the inquisitors had calculated upon. The next time they came into the yard they found him black in the face, his lips livid, insensible, throttled, and dying. Another half-minute and there would have hung a corpse in the Hawes pillory.

When they saw how nearly he was gone they were all at him

together. One unclasped the saw collar, one unbraced the waistcoat, another sprinkled water over him — not a bucketful this time, because they would have wetted themselves. Released from the infernal machine the body of No. 19 fell like a lump of clay upon the men who had reduced him to this condition. Then these worthies were in some little trepidation; for though they had caused the death of many men during the last two years, they had not yet as it happened murdered a single one on the spot openly and honestly like this; and they feared they might get into trouble. Adjoining the yard was a bath-room: to this they carried No. 19; they stripped him, and let the water run upon him from the cock, but he did not come to; then they scrubbed him just as they would a brick floor with a hard brush upon the back till his flesh was as red as blood; with this and the water together he began to gasp and sigh and faintly come back from insensibility to a new set of tortures; but so long was the struggle between life and death, that these men of business detained thus unconscionably about a single thief lost all patience with him; one scrubbed him till the blood came under the bristles, another seized him by the hair of his head and jerked his head violently back several times, and this gave him such pain that he began to struggle instinctively and, the blood now fairly set in motion, he soon moved. The last thing he remembered was a body full of aching bones; the first he awoke to was the sensation of being flayed alive from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot.

The first word he heard was — "Put his clothes on his shamming carcase!"

"Shall we dry him, sir?"

"Dry him!" roared the governor, with an oath. "No! Hasn't he given us trouble enough." (Another oath.)

They flung his clothes upon his red-hot dripping skin, and Hodges gave him a brutal push. "Go to your cell." Robinson crawled off, often wincing, and trying in vain to keep his clothes from rubbing those parts of his person where they had scrubbed the skin off him.

Hawes eyed him with grim superiority. Suddenly he had an inspiration. "Come back!" shouted he. "I never was beat by a prisoner yet, and I never will. Strap him up." At this command even the turnkeys looked amazed at one another, and hesitated. Then the governor swore horribly at them, and Hodges without another word went for the jacket.

They took hold of him; he made no resistance; he never even looked at them. He never took his eye off Hawes: on him his eye fastened like a basilisk. They took him away, and pinioned, jammed, and throttled him to the wall again. Hodges was set to watch him, and a bucket of water near to throw over him should he show the least sign of shamming again. In an hour another turnkey came and relieved Hodges — in another hour Fry relieved him, for this was tiresome work for a poor turnkey — in another hour a new hand relieved Fry, but nobody relieved No. 19.

Five mortal hours had he been in the vice without shamming. The pain his skin suffered from the late remedies, and the deadly rage at his heart, gave him unnatural powers of resistance, but at last the infernal machine conquered, and he began to turn dead faint; then Hodges, his sentinel at the time, caught up the bucket and dashed the whole contents over him. The effect was magical; the shock took away his breath for a moment, but the next the blood seemed to glow with fire in his veins, and he felt a general access of vigour to bear his torture. When this man had been six hours in the vice the governor and his myrmidons came into the yard and unstrapped him.

"You did not beat me, you see, after all," said the governor to No. 19. The turnkeys heard and revered their chief. No. 19 looked him full in the face with an eye glittering like a sabre, but said no word.

"Sulky brute!" cried the governor, "lock him up" (oath). And that evening, as a warder was rolling the prisoner's supper along the little natural railway made by the two railings of corridor B, the governor stopped the carriage and asked for 19's tin. It was given him, and he abstracted one-half of the man's

gruel. "Refractory in the yard to-day; but I'll break him before I've done with him" (oath).

The next day, brushes were wanted for the gaol. This saved Robinson for that day. It was little Josephs' turn to suffer. The governor put him on a favourite crank of his, and gave him eight thousand turns to do in four hours and a-half. He knew the boy could not do it, and this was only a formula he went through previous to pillorying the lad. Josephs had been in the pillory about an hour, when it so happened that the Reverend John Jones, the chaplain of the gaol, came into the yard. Seeing a group of warders at the mouth of a labour cell, he walked up to them, and there was Josephs in peine forte et dure.

"What is this lad's offence?" inquired Mr. Jones.

"Refractory at the crank," was the reply.

"Why, Josephs," said the reverend gentleman, "you told me you would always do your best."

"So I do, your reverence," gasped Josephs, "but this crank is too heavy for a lad like me, and that is why I am put on it to get punished."

"Hold your tongue," said Hodges roughly.

"Why is he to hold his tongue Mr. Hodges?" said the chaplain quietly; "how is he to answer my question if he holds his tongue? You forget yourself."

"Ugh! beg your pardon sir, but this one has always got some excuse or other."

"What is the matter?" roared a rough voice behind the speakers. This was Hawes, who had approached them unobserved.

"He is gammoning his reverence, sir — that is all."

"What has he been saying?"

"That the crank is too heavy for him, sir, and the waistcoat is strapped too tight it seems."

"Who says so?"

"I think so, Mr. Hawes."

"Will you take a bit of advice, sir? If you wish a prisoner well, don't you come between him and me. It will always

be the worse for him, for I am master here and master I will be."

"Mr. Hawes," replied the chaplain, "I have never done or said anything in the prison to lessen your authority, but privately I must remonstrate against the uncommon severities practised upon prisoners in this gaol. If you will listen to me I shall be much obliged to you — if not, I am afraid I must as a matter of conscience call the attention of the visiting justices to the question."

"Well, parson, the justices will be in the gaol to-day — you tell them your story and I will tell them mine," said Hawes, with a cool air of defiance.

Sure enough, at five o'clock in the afternoon, two of the visiting justices arrived accompanied by Mr. Wright, a young magistrate. They were met at the door by Hawes, who wore a look of delight at their appearance. They went round the prison with him, whilst he detained them in the centre of the building, till he had sent Hodges secretly to undo Josephs and set him on the crank; and here the party found him at work.

"You have been a long time on the crank my lad" said Hawes, "you may go to your cell."

Josephs touched his cap to the governor and the gentlemen, and went off.

"That is a nice quiet-looking boy," said one of the justices; "what is he in for?"

"He is in this time for stealing a piece of beef out of a butcher's shop."

"This time! what! is he a hardened offender? he does not look it."

"He has been three times in prison; once for throwing stones, once for orchard-robbing, and this time for the beef."

"What a young villain! at his age —"

"Don't say that Williams," said Mr. Wright, drily, "you and I were just as great villains at his age. Didn't we throw stones? rather!"

Hawes laughed in an adulatory manner, but observing that

Mr. Williams, who was a grave pompous personage did not smile at all he added —

"But not to do mischief like this one, I'll be bound."

"No," said Mr. Williams with an air of ruffled dignity.

"No?" cried the other, "where is your memory? Why, we threw stones at everything and everybody, and I suppose we did not always miss, eh? I remember your throwing a stone through the window of a place of worship — (this was a school-fellow of mine, and led me into all sorts of wickedness): I say, was it a Wesleyan shop, Williams, or a Baptist? for I forget. Never mind, you had a fit of orthodoxy. What was the young villain's second offence?"

"Robbing an orchard, sir."

"The scoundrel! robbing an orchard? Oh, what sweet reminiscences those words recall. I say Williams do you remember us two robbing Farmer Harris's orchard?"

"I remember your robbing it, and my character suffering for it."

"I don't remember that; but I remember my climbing the pear-tree, and flinging the pears down, and finding them all grubbed on my descent. What is the young villain's next — Oh! snapping a piece of beef off a counter. Ah! we never did that — because we could always get it without stealing it."

With this Mr. Wright strolled away from the others, having had what the jocose wretch used to call "a slap at humbug."

His absence was a relief to the others. These did not come there to utter sense in fun but to jest in sober earnest.

Mr. Williams hinted as much, and Hawes, whose cue it was to assent in everything to the justices, brightened his face up at the remark.

"Will you visit the cells, gentlemen," said he, with an accent of cordial invitation, "or inspect the book first?"

They gave precedence to the latter.

By the book, was meant the log-book of the gaol. In it the governor was required to report for the justices and the Home-Office all gaol events a little out of the usual routine. For in-

stance, all punishments of prisoners, all considerable sicknesses, deaths, and their supposed causes, etc., etc.

"This Josephs seems by the book to be an ill-conditioned fellow, he is often down for punishment."

"Yes! he hates work. About Gillies, sir — ringing his bell, and pretending it was an accident?"

"Yes! how old is he?"

"Thirteen."

"Is this his first offence?"

"Not by a good many. I think, gentlemen, if you were to order him a flogging, it would be better for him in the end."

"Well, give him twenty lashes. Eh! Palmer?"

Mr. Palmer assented by a nod.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Hawes, "but will you allow me to make a remark?"

"Certainly, Mr. Hawes, certainly!"

"I find twenty lashes all at once rather too much for a lad of that age. Now, if you would allow me to divide the punishment into two, so that his health might not be endangered by it, then we could give him ten or even twelve, and after a day or two as many more."

"That speaks well for your humanity Mr. Hawes; your zeal we have long known."

"Augh sir! sir!"

"I will sign the order, — and we authorize you here to divide the punishment according to your own suggestion" — (order signed).

The justices then went round the cells accompanied by Hawes. They went into the cells with an expression of a little curiosity but more repugnance on their faces, and asked several prisoners if they were well and contented. The men looked with the shrewdness of their class into their visitors' faces and measured them: saw there, first a feeble understanding, secondly an adamantine prejudice; saw that in those eyes they were wild beasts and Hawes an angel, and answered to please Hawes, whose eye was fixed on them all this time and in whose power they felt they were.

All expressed their content: some in tones so languid and empty of heart that none but Justice Shallow could have helped seeing through the humbug. Others did it better; and not a few over-did it, so that any but Justice Shallow would have seen through them. These last told Messrs. Shallow and Slender, that the best thing that ever happened to them, was coming to — Gaol. They thanked heaven they had been pulled up short in an evil career that must have ended in their ruin body and soul. As for their present situation, they were never happier in their lives, and some of them doubted much, whether, when they should reach the penal settlements, the access of liberty would repay them for the increased temptations and the loss of quiet meditation and self-communion, and the good advice of Mr. Hawes, and of his reverence the chaplain.

The gaol-birds who piped this tune were without a single exception the desperate cases of this moral hospital; they were old offenders — hardened scoundrels who meant to rob and kill and deceive to their dying day. While in prison their game was to be as comfortable as they could. Hawes could make them uncomfortable; he was always there. Under these circumstances, to lie came on the instant as natural to them as to rob would have come had some power transported them outside the prison doors with these words of penitence on their lips.

They asked where that Josephs' cell was. Hawes took them to him. They inspected him with a profound zoological look, to see whether it was more wolf or badger. Strange to say it looked neither, but a simple quiet youth of the human genus — species snob.

"He is very small to be such a ruffian," said Mr. Palmer.

"I am sorry, Josephs," said Mr. Williams pompously, "to find your name so often down for punishment."

Josephs looked up hoping to see the light of sympathy in this speaker's eyes. He saw two owls' faces attempting eagle but not reaching up to sparrow-hawk, and he was silent. He had no hope of being believed; moreover, the grim eye of Hawes rested on him, and no feebleness in it.

Messrs. Shallow and Slender receiving no answer from Jo-

sephs, who was afraid to tell the truth, were nettled, and left the cell shrugging their shoulders.

In the corridor they met the train just coming along the bannisters with supper. Pompous Mr. Williams tasted the prison diet on the spot.

"It is excellent," cried he; "why the gruel is like glue." And he fell into meditation.

"So far everything is as we could wish, Mr. Hawes, and it speaks well for the discipline and for yourself."

Hawes bowed with a gratified air.

"I will complete the inspection to-morrow."

Hawes accompanied the gentlemen to the outside gate. Here Mr. Williams turned. For the last minute or two he had been in the throes of an idea, and now he delivered himself of it.

"It would be well if Josephs' gruel were not made so strong for him."

Mr. Williams was not one of those who often say a great thing, but this deserves immortality, and could I confer immortality this of Williams' should never die! Unlike most of the things we say it does not deserve ever to die: —

"IT WOULD BE WELL IF JOSEPHS' GRUEL WERE NOT MADE SO STRONG FOR HIM!!"

CHAPTER XII.

"WILL you eat your mutton with me to-day, Palmer?" said Mr. Williams, at the gate of the gaol.

"I should be very happy, but I am engaged to dine with the lord-lieutenant."

So Mr. Williams drove home to Ashtown Park, and had to sit down to dinner with his own small family party.

Mr. Williams's mutton consisted of first a little strong gravy soup lubricated and gelatinized with a little tapioca; vis-à-vis the soup a little piece of salmon cut out of the fish's centre; lobster patties, rissoles, and two things with French names, stinking of garlic, on the flank.

Enter a boiled turkey poult with delicate white sauce; a nice tongue, not too green nor too salt, and a small saddle of six-tooth mutton, home-bred home-fed; after this a stewed pigeon, faced by greengage tart, and some yellow cream twenty-four hours old; item, an iced pudding. A little Stilton cheese brought up the rear with a nice salad. This made way for a foolish trifling dessert of muscadel grapes, guava jelly, and divers kickshaws, diluted with agreeable wines varied by a little glass of Marasquino and Co., at junctures. So far so nice!

But alas! nothing is complete in this world, not even the dinner of a fair round justice with fat capon lined. There is always some drawback or deficiency here below — confound it: the wretch of a cook had forgotten to send up the gruel à la Josephs.

Next day, after Mr. Williams had visited the female prisoners, and complimented Hawes on having initiated them into the art of silence, he asked where the chaplain was. Hawes instantly despatched a messenger to inquire, and remembering that gentleman's threatened remonstrance, parried him by anticipation thus —

"By-the-by, sir, I have a little complaint to make of him."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Williams, "what is that?"

"He took a prisoner's part against the discipline; but he doesn't know them, and they humbug him. But, sir, ought he to preach against me in the chapel of the gaol?"

"Certainly not! Surely he has not been guilty of such a breach of discipline and good taste."

"Oh! but wait, sir," said Hawes, "hear the whole truth, and then perhaps you will blame me. You must know, sir, that I sometimes let out an oath. I was in the army, and we used all to swear there; and now a little of it sticks to me in spite of my teeth, and if his reverence had done me the honor to take me to task privately about it, I would have taken off my hat to him; but it is another thing to go and preach at me for it before all the gaol."

"Of course it is. Do you mean to say he did that?"

"He did, sir. Of course, he did not mention my name, but

he preached five-and-thirty minutes all about swearing, and they all knew who he was hitting. I could see the warders grinning from ear to ear, as much as to say, 'There's another rap for you, governor!'"

"I'll speak to him."

"Thank you, sir; don't be hard on him, for he is a deserving officer; but if you would give him a quiet hint not to interfere with me. We have all of us plenty to do of our own in a gaol, if he could but see it. Ah! here comes the chaplain, sir. I will leave you together, if you please;" and Mr. Hawes made off with a business air.

The chaplain came up and bowed to Mr. Williams, who saluted him in turn somewhat coldly. There was a short silence. Mr. Williams was concocting a dignified rebuke. Before he could get it out the chaplain began: —

"I wished to speak with you yesterday, sir."

"I am at your service, Mr. Jones. What is it?"

"I want you to look into our punishments; they are far more numerous and severe than they used to be."

"On the contrary I find them less numerous."

"Why there is one punished every day."

"I have been carefully over the books, and I assure you there is a marked decrease in the number of punishments."

"Then they cannot be all put down."

"Nonsense, Mr. Jones, nonsense!"

"And, then, the severity of these punishments, sir! Is it your wish that a prisoner should be strapped in the jacket so tight that we cannot get a finger between the leather and his flesh?"

"Not unless he is refractory."

"But prisoners are very seldom refractory."

"Indeed! that is news to me."

"I assure you, sir, there are no quieter set of men than prisoners generally. They know there is nothing to be gained by resistance."

"They are on their good behaviour before you. You don't see through them my good sir. They are like madmen — you

would take them for lambs till they break out. Do you know a prisoner here called Josephs?"

"Yes sir perfectly well."

"Well now, what is his character may I ask?"

"HE IS A MILD, QUIET, DOCILE LAD."

"Ha! ha! ha! I thought so. Prisoners are the refuse of the earth. The governor knows them, and how to manage them. A discretion must be allowed him, and I see no reason to interfere between him and refractory prisoners except when he invites us."

"You are aware that several attempts at suicide have been made within the last few months?"

"Sham attempts, yes."

"One was not sham, sir," said Mr. Jones, gravely.

"Oh, Jackson, you mean. No, but he was a lunatic, and would have made away with himself anywhere — Hawes is convinced of that."

"Well, sir, I have told you the fact; I have remonstrated against the uncommon severities practised in this gaol — severities unknown in Captain O'Connor's day."

"And I have received and answered your remonstrance, sir, and there that matter ought to end."

This, and the haughty tone with which it was said discouraged and nettled the chaplain; he turned red and said, —

"In that case, sir, I have no more to say. I have discharged my conscience." With these words he was about to withdraw, but Mr. Williams stopped him.

"Mr. Jones, do you consider a clergyman justified in preaching at people?"

"Certainly not."

"The pulpit surely ought not to be made a handle for personality. It is not the way to make the pulpit itself respected."

"I don't understand you, sir."

"Mr. Hawes is much hurt at a sermon you preached against him."

"A sermon against him — never!"

"I beg your pardon; you preached a whole sermon against swearing — and he swears."

"Oh — yes! I remember — the Sunday before last. I certainly did reprobate in my discourse the habit of swearing, but no personality to Hawes was intended."

"No personality intended when you know he swears!"

"Yes, but the warders swear too. Why should Mr. Hawes take it all to himself?"

"Oh! if the turnkeys swear, then it was not so strictly personal."

"To be sure" put in Mr. Jones inadvertently, "I believe they learned it of the governor."

"There you see! Well, and even if they did not, why preach against the turnkeys? why preach at any individuals or upon passing events at all? I can remember the time no clergyman throughout the length and breadth of the land noticed passing events from the pulpit."

"I am as far from approving the practice as you are, sir."

"In those days the clergy and the laity respected one another, and there was peace in the church."

"I can only repeat, sir, that I agree with you: the pulpit should be consecrated to eternal truths not passing events."

"Good! very good! Well then?"

"What Mr. Hawes complains of was a mere accident."

"An accident, Mr. Jones? Oh, Mr. Jones!"

"An accident which I undertake to explain to Mr. Hawes himself."

"By all means; that will be the best way of making friends again. I need not tell you that a gaol could not go on in which the governor and the chaplain did not pull together. The fact is, Mr. Jones, the clergy of late have been assuming a little too much, and that has made the laity a little jealous. Now, although you are a clergyman, you are Her Majesty's servant so long as you are here, and must co-operate with the general system of the gaol. Come sir, you are younger than I am; let me give you a piece of advice — DON'T OVERSTEP YOUR DUTY," etc.

In this strain Mr. Williams buz, buz, buzzed longer than I can afford him paper, it is so dear. He pumped a stream of time-honored phrases on his hearer, and dissolved away with him as the overflow of a pump carries away a straw on its shallow stream down a stable-yard.

When the pump was pumped dry, he stopped.

Then the chaplain, who had listened with singular politeness, got in a word. "You forget, sir, I have resigned the chaplaincy of the gaol?"

"Oh! ah! yes! well then I need say no more sir; good day, Mr. Jones."

"Good morning, sir."

Soon after this up came Hawes with a cheerful countenance.

"Well, parson, are you to manage the prisoners and I to preach to them, or are we to go on as we are."

"Things are to go on as they are, Mr. Hawes; but that is nothing to me, I have discharged my conscience. I have remonstrated against the severities practised on our prisoners. COLD WATER HAS BEEN THROWN ON MY REMONSTRANCES, and I shall therefore interfere no more."

"That is the wise way to look at it, you may depend!"

"We shall see which was in the right, I have discharged my conscience. But Mr. Hawes I am hurt you should say I preached a sermon against you."

"I dare say you are sir, but who began it; if you had not talked of complaining to the justices of me I should never have said a word against you."

"That is all settled: but it is due to my character to show you that I had no intention of pointing at you or any living creature from the pulpit."

"Well, make me believe that."

"If you will do me the favour to come to my room I can prove it to you."

The chaplain took the governor to his room and opened two drawers in a massive table.

"Mr. Hawes," said he, "do you see this pile of sermons in this right hand drawer?"

"I see them," said Hawes, with a doleful air, "and I suppose I shall hear some of them before long."

"These," said Mr. Jones, smiling with perfect good-humour at the innocuous sneer, "are sermons I composed when I was curate of Little-Stoke. Of late I have been going regularly through my Little-Stoke discourses, as you may see. I take one from the pile in this drawer, and after first preaching it in the gaol I place it in the left drawer on that smaller pile."

"That you mayn't preach it again by accident; well, that is business."

"If you look into the left pile near the top, you will find the one I preached against profane discourse, with the date at which it was first composed."

"Here it is, sir, — Little-Stoke, May 15, 1847."

"Well, Mr. Hawes, now was that written against you? — come!"

"No! I confess it could not; but look here, if a man sends a bullet into me, it doesn't matter to me whether he made the gun on purpose or shot me out of an old one that he had got by him."

"But I tell you that I took the sermon out in its turn, and knew no more what it was about until I opened it in the pulpit, than I knew what this one is about which I am going to preach next Sunday morning — it was all chance."

"It was my bad luck, I suppose," said Hawes a little sulkily.

"And mine too: could I anticipate that a discourse composed for and preached to a rural congregation would be deemed to have a personal application here?"

"Well! no!"

"I have now only to add that I extremely regret the circumstance."

"Say no more sir. When a gentleman expresses his regret to another gentleman, there is an end of the grievance."

"I will take care the sort of thing never happens again."

"Enough said, sir."

"It never can, however, for I shall preach but one more Sunday here."

"And I am verry sorry for it Mr. Jones."

"And after this occurrence I am determined to write both sermons for the occasion, so there is sure to be nothing personal in them."

"Yes that is the surest way; well, sir, you and I never had but this one little misunderstanding, and now that is explained, we shall part friends."

"A glass of ale, Mr. Hawes?"

"I don't care if I do, sir," — (the glasses were filled and emptied,) — "I must go and look after my chickens; the justices have ordered Gillies to be flogged. You will be there I suppose in half an hour."

"Well, if my attendance is not absolutely necessary —"

"We will excuse you sir if not convenient."

"Thank you — good morning!" and the reconciled officials parted.

Little Gillies was hoisted to receive twenty lashes; at the twelfth the governor ordered him down.

He broke off the tale as our magazines do, with a promise — "To be continued."

Little Gillies, like their readers, cried out, "No, sir. Oh, sir! please flog me to an end, and ha' done with it. I don't feel the cuts near so much now — my back seems dead like."

Little Gillies was arguing against himself. Hawes had not divided his punishment with the view of lessening his pain. It was droll, but more sad than droll, to hear the poor little fellow begging Hawes to flog him to an end — to flog him out; with similar idioms.

"Hold your [oath] noise!" Hawes shrank with disgust from noise in his prison, and could not comprehend why the prisoners could not take their punishment without infringing upon the great and glorious silence of which the gaol was the temple and he the high priest. "The beggars get no good by kicking up a row," argued he.

"Hold your noise! — take him to his cell!"

Whether it was because he had desecrated the temple with

noise, or from the accident of having attracted the governor's attention, the weight of the system fell on this small object now.

Gillies was ordered to make a fabulous number of crank revolutions — fabulous, at least, in connection with his tender age; he was put on the lightest crank, but the lightest was heavy to thirteen years. Not being the infant Hercules he could not perform this labour; so Hawes put him in jacket and collar almost the whole day. His young and supple frame was in his favour, but once or twice he could hardly help shamming, and then they threw half a bucket over him.

The next day he was put on the crank, and not being able to complete the task that was set him before dinner he was strapped up until the evening. The next day the governor tried another tack. He took away his meat soup and gruel, and gave him nothing but bread and water. Strange to say, this change of diet did not supply the deficiency; he could not do the infant Hercules his work even on bread and water. Then the governor deprived the obstinate little dog of his chapel. "If you won't work, I'm [participle] if you shall pray." The boy missed the recreation of hearing Mr. Jones hum the liturgy; missed it in a way you cannot conceive. Your soporific was his excitement; think of that.

Little Gillies became sadly dispirited, and weaker at the crank than before; ergo, the governor sentenced him to be fourteen days without bed or gas.

But when they took away his bed and did not light his gas, little Gillies began to lose his temper; he made a great row about this last stroke of discipline. "I won't live such a life as this," said little Gillies, in a pet. "Why don't the governor hang me at once?"

"What is that noise?" roared the governor, who was in the corridor, and had long ears.

"It is No. 50 kicking up a row at having his bed and gas taken," replied a turnkey, with a note of admiration in his voice.

The governor bounced into the cell. "Are you grumbling

at that you rebellious young rascal; you forget there are a dozen lashes owing you yet." Now the boy had not forgotten but he hoped the governor had. "Well, you shall have the rest to-morrow."

With these words ringing in his ears little Gillies was locked up for the night at six o'clock. His companions darkness and unrest — for a prisoner's bed is the most comfortable thing he has, and the change from it to a stone floor is as great to him as it would be to us — darkness and unrest, and the cat waiting to spring on him at peep of day. Quæ cum ita erant, as the warder put the key into his cell the next morning he heard a strange gurgling; he opened the door quickly, and there was little Gillies hanging; a chair was near him on which he had got to suspend himself by his handkerchief from the window; he was black in the face, but struggling violently, and had one hand above his head convulsively clutching the handkerchief. Fry lifted him up by the knees, and with some difficulty loosed the handkerchief.

Little Gillies, as soon as his throat could vent a sound, roared with fright at the recent peril, and then cried a bit, finally expressed a hope his breakfast would not be taken from him for this act of insubordination.

This infraction of discipline was immediately reported to the governor.

"Little brute," cried Hawes, viciously, "I'll work him!"

"Oh! he knew I was at hand, sir," said Fry, "or he would not have tried it."

"Of course he would not; I remember last night he was grumbling at his bed being taken away. I'll serve him out!"

Soon after this the governor met the chaplain, and told him the case; "He shall make you an apology," — imperative mood him.

"Me, an apology!"

"Of course — you are the officer that has the care of his soul, and he shall apologise to you for making away with it or trying it on."

This resolution was conveyed to Gillies with fearful threats, so when the chaplain visited him he had got his lesson pat.

"I beg your reverence's pardon for hanging myself" began he at sight rather loud and as bold as brass.

"Beg the Almighty's pardon, not mine."

"No! the governor said it was yours I was to beg," demurred Gillies.

"Very well. But you should beg God's pardon more than mine."

"For why, sir?"

"For attempting your life, which was his gift."

"Oh! I needn't beg his pardon; he doesn't care what becomes of me; if he did he wouldn't let them bully me as they do day after day, drat 'em."

"I am sorry to see one so young as you so hardened. I dare say the discipline of the gaol is bitter to you, it is to all idle boys; but you might be in a much worse place — and will if you do not mend."

"A worse place than this, your reverence! Oh, my eye!"

"And you ought to be thankful to Heaven for sending the turnkey at that moment (here I'm sorry to say little Gillies grinned satirically), or you would be in a worse place. Would you rather be here or in Hell?" half asked, half explained the reverend gentleman in the superior tone of one closing a discussion for ever.

"In Hell!!!" replied Gillies, opening his eyes with astonishment at the doubt.

Mr. Jones was dumb-foundered; of all the mischances that befall us in argument this coup perplexes us most. He looked down at the little ignorant wretch, and decided it would be useless to waste theology on him. He fell instead into familiar conversation with him, and then Gillies, with the natural communicativeness of youth, confessed to him "that he had heard the warder at the next cell before he ventured to step off the chair and suspend himself."

"Well! but you ran a great risk too. Suppose he had not

come into your cell — suppose he had been called away for a minute."

"I should have been scragged, and no mistake," said the boy, with a shiver. Throttling had proved no joke. "But I took my chance of that," added Gillies. "I was determined to give them a fright; besides if he hadn't come it would all be over by now sir, and all the better for me I know."

Further communication was closed by the crank, which demanded young Hopeful by its mouth-piece Fry. After dinner, to his infinite disgust, he received the other moiety of his flogging; but by a sort of sulky compensation his bed was kicked into his cell again at night by Fry acting under the governor's orders.

"That was not a bad move, hanging myself a little — a very little," said the young prig. He hooked up his recovered treasure; and, though smarting all over, coiled himself up in it and in three minutes forgot present pain past dangers and troubles to come.

The plan pursued with Robinson was to keep him at low-water mark by lowering his diet; without this, so great was his natural energy and disposition to work, that no crank excuse could have been got for punishing him; and at this period he was too wise and self-restrained to give any other. But after a few days of unjust torture he began to lose hope; and with hope patience oozed away too, and his enemy saw with grim satisfaction wild flashes of mad rage come every now and then to his eye, harder and harder to suppress. "He will break out before long," said Hawes to himself, "and then —"

Robinson saw the game, and a deep dark hatred of his enemy fought on the side of his prudence. This bitter raging struggle of contending passions in the thief's heart harmed his soul more than had years of burglary and petty larceny. All the vices of the old gaol system are nothing compared with the diabolical effect of solitude on a heart smarting with daily wrongs.

Brooding on self is always corrupting; but to brood on self and wrongs, is to ripen for madness, murder, and all crime.

Between Robinson and these there lay one little bit of hope — only one, but it was a reasonable one. There was an official in the gaol possessed of a large independent authority; and paid (Robinson argued) to take the side of humanity in the place. This man was the representative of the national religion in the gaol, as Hawes was of the law. Robinson was too sharp at picking up everything in his way, and had been too often in prisons and their chapels not to know that cruelty and injustice are contrary to the Gospel, and to the national religion, which is in a great measure founded thereon. He therefore hoped and believed the chaplain of the gaol would come between him and his persecutor if he could be made to understand the case. Now it happened just after the justices had thrown cold water on Mr. Jones's little expostulation, that Robinson was pinned to the wall, jammed in the waistcoat, and throttled in the collar. He had been thus some time, when casting his despairing eyes around they alighted upon the comely, respectable face of Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones was looking gravely at the victim.

Robinson devoured him with his eyes and his ears. He heard him say in an under-tone,

"What is this for?"

"Hasn't done his work at the crank," was the answer.

Then Mr. Jones, after taking another look at the sufferer, gave a sigh and walked away. Robinson's hopes from this gentleman rose; moreover, part of his sermon next Sunday inveighed against inhumanity; and Robinson, who had no conception the sermon was several years old, looked on it as aimed at Hawes and his myrmidons, and as the precursor of other and effective remonstrances. Not long after this, to his delight, the chaplain visited him alone. He seized this opportunity of securing the good man's interference in his favour. He told him in glowing words the whole story of his sufferings; and with a plain and manly eloquence appealed to him to make his chapel words good, and come between the blood-hounds and their prey.

"Sir, there are twenty or thirty poor fellows besides me that will bless your four bones night and day, if you will but put out

your hand and save us from being abused like dogs and nailed to the wall like kites and weasels. We are not vermin sir, we are men. Many a worse man is abroad than we that are caged here like wild beasts. Our bodies are men's bodies, sir, and our hearts are men's hearts. You can't soften *their* hearts, for they haven't such a thing about them; but only just you open your mouth and speak your mind in right-down earnest, and you will shame them into treating us openly like human beings, let them hate us and scorn us at bottom as they will. We have no friend here, sir, but you, not one; have pity on us! have pity on us!"

And the thief stretched out his hands, and fixed his ardent glistening eyes upon the successor of the apostles.

The successor of the apostles hung his head, and showed plainly that he was not unmoved. A moment of suspense followed — Robinson hung upon his answer. At length Mr. Jones raised his head, and said with icy coldness —

"Mr. Hawes is the governor of this gaol. I have no power to interfere with his acts supported as they are by the visiting justices; and I have but one advice to give you: Submit to the discipline and to Mr. Hawes in everything; it will be the worse for you if you don't."

So saying he went out abruptly, leaving his petitioner with his eyes fixed ruefully upon the door by which his last hope had left him.

The moment the reverend official had got outside the door, his countenance which had fallen took a complacent air. He prided himself that he had conquered an impulse, an idle impulse.

"The poor fellow is in the right," said he to himself as he left the cell; "but if I had let him see I thought so, he might have been encouraged to resist, and then he would have only suffered all the more."

And so having done what he calculated was the expedient thing to do, he went his way satisfied and at peace with Mr. Hawes and all mankind.

When he glided away and took hope with him, disdain,

despair, and phrenzy gushed from the thief's boiling bosom in one wild moan; and with that moan he dashed himself on his face on the floor, though it was as hard as Hawes and cold as Jones.

Thus he lay crushed in blank despair a moment, the next he rose fiercely to his knees, he looked up through the hole they called his window, and saw a little piece of blue sky no bigger than a Bible, he held his hand up to that blue sky, he fixed his dilating eye on that blue sky, and with one long raging yell of horrible words hurled from a heart set on fire by wrongs and despair and tempting fiends, he cursed the successor of the apostles before the Majesty of Heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOLITUDE is no barrier whatever to sin. Such prayers as Robinson's are a disgrace to those who provoke them, but a calamity to him who utters them. Robinson was now a far worse man than ever he had been out of prison. The fiend had fixed a claw in his heart, and we may be sure he felt the recoil of his ill prayers. He hated the human race, which produced such creatures as Hawes and nothing to keep them in check.

"From this hour I speak no more to any of those beasts!"

Such was his resolve, made with clenched teeth and nails; and he curled himself up like a snake and turned his back upon mankind, and his face to the wall. Robinson had begun his career in this place full of hopes. He hoped by good conduct to alleviate his condition as he had done in other gaols; conscious of various talents he hoped by skill as well as by good conduct to better his condition even in a gaol; such hopes are a part of our nature, and were not in his case unreasonable. These hopes were soon extinguished. He came down to a confident hope that by docility and good conduct he should escape all evils except those inseparable from a prisoner's lot.

When he discovered that Hawes loved to punish his prisoners, and indeed could hardly get through the day without it, and that his crank was an unavoidable trap to catch the pri-

soners and betray them to punishment, he sank lower and lower in despondency, till at last there was but one bit of blue hope in all his horizon. He still hoped something against tyranny and cruelty from the representative of the gospel of mercy in the place. But when his reverence told him nothing was to be expected from that quarter, his last hope went out and he was in utter darkness.

Yet Mr. Jones was not a hypocrite nor a monster; he was only a common-place man — a thing moulded by circumstances instead of moulding them. In him the official outweighed the apostle, for a very good reason — he was common-place. This was his defect. His crime was misplacing his common-place self. A man has a right to be common-place in the middle of the New Forest, or in the great desert, or at Fudley-cum-Pipes in the fens of Lincolnshire. But at the helm of a struggling nation, or in the command of an army in time of war, or at the head of the religious department of a gaol, fighting against human wolves tigers and foxes, to be common-place is an iniquity and leads to crime.

The man was a humane man. It was not in his nature to be cruel to a prisoner, and his humanity was, like himself, negative not positive, passive not active — of course: it was common-place humanity.

After looking on in silence for a twelvemonth or two he remonstrated against Hawes's barbarity. He would have done more; he would have stopped it — if it could have been stopped without any trouble. Cold water was thrown on his remonstrance; he cooled directly!

Now cold water and hot fire have been thrown on men battling for causes no higher nor holier than this, yet neither has fire been able to wither nor water to quench their honest zeal. But this good soul on being sprinkled laid down his arms; he was common-place. Moreover, he was guilty of something beside cowardice. He let a small egotistical pique sully as well as betray a great cause. "The justices have thrown cold water on my remonstrance — very well, gentlemen,

torture your prisoners ad libitum; I shall interfere no more; we shall see which was in the right, you or I."

This was a narrow little view of wide and terrible consequences; it was infinitesimal egotism — the spirit and essence of common-place.

His inclinations were good, but feeble — he was common-place. His heart was good, but tepid — he was common-place. Had he loved the New Testament and the Saviour of mankind, he would have fought Hawes tooth and nail; he could not have helped it; but he did not love either; he only liked them — he was common-place. When the thief cursed this man, he was guilty of an extravagance as well as a crime; the man was not worth cursing — he was common-place.

The new chaplain arrived soon after these events. The new chaplain was accompanied by his friend the Rev. James Lepel chaplain of a gaol in the north of England. After five years' unremitting duty he was now enjoying a week's leave of absence.

The three clergymen visited the cells. Mr. Lepel cross-examined several prisoners. The new chaplain spoke little, but seemed observant, and once or twice made a note. Now it so happened that almost the last cell they entered was Tom Robinson's. They found him sitting all of a heap in a corner, moody and sullen.

At sight of three black coats and white ties the thief opened his eyes, and with a snort of repugnance, turned his back on the intruders.

"Come, my lad," said the turnkey sternly, "no tricks, if you please. Turn round," cried he savagely, "and make your bow to the gentlemen."

Robinson wheeled round with flashing eyes, and checking an evident desire to dash at them, instantly made a bow so very low, so very obsequious, and, by a furtive expression, so contemptuous, that Mr. Lepel coloured with indignation and moved towards the door in silence.

The turnkey muttered, "He has been very strange this few days past. Mr. Fry thinks he is hardly safe." Then, turning to

the new chaplain, the man, whose name was Evans, said, "Better not go into his cell sir without one of us with you."

"What is the matter with him?" inquired the reverend gentleman.

"Oh, I don't know as there is anything the matter with him; only he has been disciplined once or twice, and it goes down the wrong way with some of them at first starting. Governor says he will have to be put in the dark cell if he does not get better."

"The dark cell? hum! Pray what is the effect of the dark cell on a prisoner?"

"Well sir it cows them more than anything."

"Where are your dark cells?"

"They are down below, sir. You can look at them after the kitchen."

"I must go into the town," said Mr. Lepel, looking at his watch. "I promised to dine with my relations at three o'clock."

"Come and see the oubliettes first. We have seen every-thing else."

"With all my heart!"

They descended below the ground-floor, and then Evans unlocked a massive tight-fitting door opening upon what appeared to be a black substance; this was, however, no substance — but vacancy without any degree of light. The light crossing the threshold from the open door seemed to cut a slice out of it.

The new-comers looked into it. Mr. Lepel with grim satisfaction, the other with awe and curiosity.

"When shall you be back, Lepel?" inquired he thoughtfully.

"Oh, before nine o'clock."

"Then perhaps you will both do me the honour to drink a cup of tea with me," said Mr. Jones, courteously.

"With pleasure."

"Good-bye then for the present," said the new chaplain.

"Why, where are you going?"

"In here."
"What into the dark cell?"
"Yes!"
"Well!" ejaculated Evans.
"You won't stay there long."
"Until you return Lepel."
"What a fancy!"

Mr. Jones looked not a little surprised. The turnkey grinned. The reverend gentleman stepped at once into the cell, and was lost to sight.

"Do not let me out before eight o'clock," said his voice, "and you, Lepel, inquire for me as soon as you return, for I feel a little nervous. Now shut the door."

The door was closed on the reverend gentleman, and the little group outside, after looking at one another with a humorous expression, separated, and each went after his own affairs.

Evans lingered behind, and took a look at the massy door, behind which for the first time a man had gone voluntarily, and after grave deliberation delivered himself at long intervals of the two following profound reflections:

"Well! I'm blest!!
"Well! I'm blowed!!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Lepel returned somewhat earlier than he had intended. On entering the gaol it so happened that he met the governor, and seized this opportunity of conversing with him.

He expressed at once so warm an admiration of the gaol and the system pursued in it, that Hawes began to take a fancy to him.

They compared notes, and agreed that no system but the separate and silent had a leg to stand on; and as they returned together from visiting the ground-floor cells, Mr. Lepel had the honour of giving a new light to Hawes himself.

"If I could have my way the debtors should be in separate cells. I would have but one system in a gaol."

Hawes laughed incredulously. "There would be a fine outcry if we treated the debtors the same as we do the rogues."

"Mr. Hawes," said the other firmly, "an honest man very seldom finds his way into any part of a gaol. Extravagant people, and tradesmen who have abused the principle of credit, deserve punishment, and above all require discipline and compulsory self-communion to bring them to amend their ways."

"That is right, sir," cried Hawes, a sudden light breaking on him, "and it certainly is a mistake letting them enjoy themselves."

"And corrupt each other."

Hawes. A prison should be confinement.

Lepel. And seclusion from all but profitable company.

Hawes. It is not a place of amusement.

Lepel. There should be no idle conversation.

"And no noise," put in Hawes hastily.

"However this prison is a model for all the prisons in the land, and I shall feel quite sad when I go back to my duty in Cumberland."

"Cumberland? Why you are our new chaplain, aren't ye?"

"No! I am not so fortunate, I am a friend of his; my name is Lepel."

"Oh, you are Mr. Lepel, and where is our one? I heard he had been all over the gaol."

"What have you not seen him?"

"No! he has never been near me. Not very polite, I think."

"Oh! Oh!"

"Hallo! what is wrong!"

"I think I know where he is; he is not far off. I will go and find him if you will excuse me."

"No! we won't trouble you. Here Hodges, come here. Have you seen the new chaplain — where is he?"

"Well, sir, Evans tells me he is —" click!

"Confound you, don't stand grinning. Where is he?"

"In the black hole, sir!"

"What d'ye mean by the black hole? The dust-hole?"

"No, sir, I mean the dark cells."

"Then why don't you say the dark cells? Has he been there long?"

Mr. Lepel answered the question. "Ever since three o'clock, and it is nearly nine; and we are both of us to drink tea with Mr. Jones."

Mr. Hawes showed no hurry. "What did he want to go in them for?"

"I have no idea, unless it was to see what it is like."

"Well, but I like that!" said Hawes. "That is entering into the system. Let us see how he comes on."

Mr. Hawes, Mr. Lepel, and Hodges, went to the dark cells; on their way they were joined by Evans.

The governor took out his own keys, and Evans having indicated the cell, for there were three, he unlocked it, and threw the door wide open. They all looked in, but there was nothing to be seen.

"I hope nothing is the matter," said Mr. Lepel, in considerable agitation, and he groped his way into the cave. As he put out his hand it was taken almost violently by the self-immured, who cried —

"Oh, Lepel!" and held him in a strong, but tremulous grasp. Then after a pause, he said more calmly: "The light dazzles me! the place seems on fire now! Perhaps you will be kind enough to lend me your arm, Lepel."

Mr. Lepel led him out; he had one hand before his eyes, which he gradually withdrew while speaking. He found himself in the middle of a group with a sly sneer on their faces mixed with some curiosity.

"How long have I been there?" asked he quietly.

"Six hours; it is nine o'clock."

"Only six hours! incredible!"

"Well, sir, I suppose you are not sorry to be out?"

"This is Mr. Hawes, the governor," put in Mr. Lepel.

Hawes continued jocosely — "What does it feel like, sir?"

"I shall have the honour of telling you that in private, Mr. Hawes. I think, Lepel, we have an engagement with Mr. Jones at nine o'clock." So saying, the new chaplain, with a bow to the governor, took his friend's arm, and went to tea with Mr. Jones.

"There now," said Hawes to the turnkeys, "that is a gentleman. He doesn't blurt everything out before you fellows; he reserves it for his superior officer."

Next morning the new chaplain requested Mr. Lepel to visit the prisoners' cells in a certain order, and make notes of their characters as far as he could guess them. He himself visited them in another order and made his notes. In the evening they compared these. We must be content with an extract of two.

Mr. Lepel's.	The New Chaplain's.
Rock, No. 37. — A very promising subject, penitent and resigned. Says, "if the door of the prison was left open he would not go out." Has learned 250 texts, and is learning fifteen a-day.	37, *Rock*. — Professes penitence. Asked him suddenly what sins weighed most on his conscience. No answer. Prepared with an abstract penitence, but no particulars: reason obvious. Mem. With this man speak on any topic rather than religion at present. Pray for this self-deceiver as I would for a murderer.
Josephs, No. . — An interesting boy, ignorant, but apparently well-disposed. In ill health. The surgeon should be consulted about him.	*Josephs* —. — An amiable boy; seems out of health and spirits. Says, he has been overworked and punished for inability. Shall intercede with the governor for him. Mem. Pale and hollow-eyed, pulse feeble.
Strutt, No. . — Sullen, impenitent, and brutal. Says, it is no use his learning texts,	*Strutt*. — This poor man is in a state of deep depression. I much fear the want of light,

MR LEPEL'S.

they won't stay in his head. Discontented; wants to go out in the yard. The best one can hope for here is, that the punishment, which he finds so severe, will deter him in future. Says, he will never come here again, but doubts whether he shall get out alive. Gave him tracts.

Jessup.—The prisoner whose term, owing to his excellent conduct, is reduced from twelvemonths to nine months; so that he goes out next week. Having discovered that the news had not been conveyed to him, I asked Mr. Hawes to let me be the bearer. When I told him, his only remark was, with an air of regret: "Then I shall not finish my gospels!" I begged for an explanation, when he told me that for eight months he had been committing the gospels to heart, and that he was just beginning St. John, which now he should never finish. I said he must finish it at home in the intervals of honest labour. His countenance brightened, and he said he would.

A most cheering case, and one of the best proofs of the efficacy of the separate and silent system I have met with

THE NEW CHAPLAIN'S.

and air, and society is crushing him. He is fifty years old.

Mem. Inquire whether separate confinement tries men harder after a certain age. Talked to him; told him stories with all the animation I could. Stayed half an hour with him: he brightened up a little, and asked me to come again. Nothing to be done here at present but amuse the poor soul.

Mem. Watch him jealously.

Jessup. — Like Rock, professes extravagant penitence, indifference to personal liberty, and love of Scripture. He overdoes it greatly: however it appears he has gained his point by it. He has induced Mr. Jones to plead for him in mitigation of punishment, and next week he leaves prison for a little while.

He asked me to hear him some texts. I said, "No, my poor fellow; they will do you as much good whether I hear you them or not." By a light that flashed into his eye I saw he comprehended the equivoque; but he suppressed his intelligence, and answered piously, "that they will, your reverence."

MR. LEPEL'S.

for some time. I fear I almost grudge you the possession of such an example.

Robinson. — A bad subject, rebellious and savage; refuses to speak. Time and the discipline will probably break him of this; but I do not think he will ever make a good prisoner.

THE NEW CHAPLAIN'S.

Robinson. — This man wears a singular look of scorn as well as hatred, which, coupled with his repeated refusals to speak to me, provoked me so that I felt strongly tempted to knock him down. How unworthy, to be provoked at anything a great sufferer can say or do: every solitary prisoner must surely be a great sufferer.

My judgment is quite at fault here. I know no more than a child what is this man's character, and the cause of his strange conduct.

Mem. Inquire his antecedents of the turnkeys. Oh, Lord, enlighten me, and give me wisdom for the great and deep and difficult task I have so boldly undertaken!

The next day the new chaplain met the surgeon in the gaol, and took him into Josephs' cell.

"He only wants a little rest, and nourishing food; he would be the better for a little amusement, but —" and the man of science shrugged his shoulders.

"Can you read?" said Mr. Lepel.

"Very little, sir."

"Let the schoolmaster come to him every day," suggested that experienced individual. He knew what separate confinement was. What bores a boy out of prison amuses him in it.

Hawes gave a cold consent. So poor little Josephs had a richer diet, and rest from crank and pillory, and the school-

master spent half an hour every day teaching him; and above all the new chaplain sat in his cell, and told him stories that interested him — told him how very wicked some boys had been; what a many clever wicked things they had done and not been happy, then how they had repented and learned to pray to be good, and how by divine help they had become good, and how some had gone to heaven soon after, and were now happy and pure as the angels; and others had stayed on earth and were good and honest and just men; not so happy as those others who were dead, but content (and that the wicked never are), and waiting God's pleasure to go away and be happy for ever.

Joseph listened to the good chaplain's tales and conversation with wonderful interest, and his face always brightened when that gentleman came into his cell. The schoolmaster reported him not quick, but docile. These were his halcyon days.

But Robinson remained a silent basilisk. The chaplain visited him every day, said one or two kind words to him, and retired without receiving a word or a look of acknowledgment. One day, surprised and hurt by this continued obduracy, the chaplain retired with an audible sigh. Robinson heard it, and ground his teeth with satisfaction. Solitary, tortured, and degraded, he had still found one whom he could annoy a little bit.

The governor and the new chaplain agreed charmingly; constant civilities passed between them. The chaplain assisted Mr. Hawes to turn the phrases of his yearly report; and Mr. Hawes more than repaid him by consenting to his introducing various handicrafts into the prison — at his own expense, not the county's.

Parson must have got a longer purse than most of us thought Hawes, and it increased his respect.

Hawes shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, "You are just flinging your money into the dirt;" but the other interpreting his look, said —

"I hope more good from this than from all the sermons I shall preach in your chapel."

Probably Mr. Hawes would not have been so indifferent had

he known that this introduction of rational labor was intended as the first step towards undermining and expelling the sacred crank.

This clergyman had a secret horror and hatred of the crank. He called it a monster got by folly upon science to degrade labour below theft; for theft is immoral, but crank labour is immoral and idiotic too, said he. The crank is a diabolical engine, to keep thieves from ever being anything but thieves. He arrived at this conclusion by a chain of reasoning for which there is no room in a narrative already smothered in words.

This antipathy to the crank quite overpowered him. He had been now three weeks in the gaol, and all that time only thrice in the labor-yard. It cut his understanding like a knife to see a man turn a handle for hours and nothing come of it.

However, one day, from a sense of duty, he forced himself into the labor-yard, and walked wincing down the row.

"These are our school-men," said he. "As the school-men laboured most intellectually and scientifically—practical result, *nil*, so these labour harder than other men — result, *nil*. This is literally 'beating the air.' The ancients imagined tortures particularly trying to nature, that of Sisyphus to wit; everlasting labor embittered by everlasting nihilification. We have made Sisyphism vulgar. Here are fifteen Sisyphi. Only the wise or ancients called this thing infernal torture; our old women call it salutary discipline."

He was running on in this style, heaping satire and sorrow upon the crank, when suddenly, at the mouth of one of the farthest cells, he stopped and threw up his hands with an ejaculation of astonishment and dismay. There was a man jammed in a strait waistcoat, pinned against the wall by a strap, and throttling in a huge collar; his face was white, his lips livid, and his eyes rolling despairingly. It was Thomas Robinson. This sight took away the chaplain's breath. When he recovered himself, "What is this," said he to the turnkeys, sternly.

"Prisoner refractory at the crank," answered Hodges, doggedly.

The clergyman walked up to Robinson and examined the

collar, the waistcoat, and the strap. "Have you the governor's authority for this act?" said he firmly.

"Rule is if they won't do their work, the jacket."

"Have you the governor's authority for this particular act?"

"In a general way we have."

"In a word you are not acting under his authority and you know it; take the man down this moment."

The men hesitated.

"If you don't I shall."

The turnkeys, a little staggered by his firmness, began to confer in whispers. The chaplain, who was one of your decided men, could not wait the consultation. He sprang to Robinson's head and began to undo the collar. The others seeing this decided move came and helped him. The collar and the strap being loosed, the thief's body ensacked as it was fell helplessly forward. He had fainted during the discussion, in fact his senses were shut when the chaplain first came to the cell. The chaplain caught him, and being a very strong man saved him from a dangerous fall, and seated him gently with his back to the wall. Water was sprinkled in his face. The chaplain went hastily to find the governor. He came to him pale and out of breath.

"I found the turnkeys outraging a prisoner."

"Indeed!" said the governor. It was a new idea to him that anything could be an outrage on a prisoner.

"They confessed they had not your authority, so I took upon me to undo their act."

"Humph!"

"I now leave the matter in your hands, sir."

"I will see into it, sir."

The chaplain left Mr. Hawes abruptly, for he was seized with a sudden languor and nausea; he went to his own house and there he was violently sick. Shaking off as quickly as he could this weakness, he went at once to Robinson's cell. He found him coiled up like a snake. He came hastily into the cell with the natural effusion of a man who had taken another man's part.

"I want to ask you one question:—What had you done that they should use you like that?"

No answer

"It is not from idle curiosity I ask you, but that I may be able to advise you, or intercede for you if the punishment should appear too severe for the offence."

No answer.

"Come, I would wait here ever so long upon the chance of your speaking to me if you were the only prisoner, but there are others in their solitude longing for me; time is precious; will you speak to one who desires to be your friend?"

No answer.

A flush of impatience and anger crossed the chaplain's brow: in most men it would have found vent in words. This man but turned away to hide it from its object. He gulped his brief ire down and said only, "So then I am never to be any use to you," and went sorrowfully away.

Robinson coiled himself up a little tighter, and hugged his hatred of all mankind closer, like a treasure that some one had just tried to do him out of.

As the chaplain came out of his cell he was met by Hawes, whose countenance wore a gloomy expression, that soon found its way into words.

"The chaplain is not allowed to interfere between me and the prisoners in this gaol."

"Explain, Mr. Hawes."

"You have been and ordered my turnkeys to relax punishment."

"You forget, Mr. Hawes, I explained to you that they were acting without the requisite authority from you."

"That is all right, and I have called them to account, but then you are not to order them either, you should have applied to me."

"I see, I see! Forgive me this little breach of routine where a human creature's sufferings would have been prolonged by etiquette."

"Ugh! Well it must not occur again."

"I trust the occasion will not."

"For that matter you will often see refractory prisoners punished in this gaol. You had better mind your own business in the gaol, it will find you work enough."

"I will, Mr. Hawes; to dissuade men from cruelty is a part of it."

"If you come between me and the prisoners, sir, you won't be long here."

The new chaplain smiled.

"What does it matter whether I'm here or in Patagonia, so that I do my duty wherever I am?" said he with a fine mixture of good-humour and spirit.

Hawes turned his back rudely, and went and reduced Robinson's supper fifty per cent.

"Evans, is that sort of punishment often inflicted here?"

"Well, sir, yes. It is a common punishment of this goal."

"It must be very painful."

"No, sir, it's a little *on*comfortable — that is all; and then we 've got such a lot here we are obliged to be down on 'em like a sledge-hammer, or they 'd eat us up alive."

"Have you got the things, the jacket, collar, etc."

"I know where to find them," said Evans with a sly look.

"Bring them to me directly to this empty cell."

"Well, sir," higgled Evans, "in course I don't like to refuse your reverence."

"Then don't refuse me," retorted the other, sharp as a needle.

Evans went off directly and soon returned with the materials. The chaplain examined them awhile; he then took off his coat.

"Operate on me, Evans."

"Operate on you, sir!"

"Yes! There, don't stand staring my good man, hold up the waistcoat — now strap it tight — tighter — no nonsense — Robinson was strapped tighter than that yesterday. I want to know what we are doing to our fellow-creatures in this place. The collar now."

"But, sir, the collar will nip you. I tell you that before hand."

"Not more than it nips my prisoners. Now strap me to the wall. Why do you hesitate?"

"I don't know whether I am doing right, sir, you being a parson. Perhaps I shall have no luck after this."

"Don't be silly, Evans. Volenti non fit injuria — that means, you may torture a bishop if he bids you."

"There you are, sir."

"Yes! here I am. Now go away and come in half an hour."

"I think I had better stay, sir. You will soon be sick of it."

"Go, and come in half an hour," was the firm reply.

Our chaplain felt that if the man did not go he should not be five minutes before he asked to be released, and he was determined to know "what we are doing."

Evans had not been gone ten minutes before he bitterly repented letting him go, and when that worthy returned he found him muttering faintly, "It is in a good cause — it is in a good cause —"

Evans wore a grin.

"You shall pay for that grin," said the chaplain to himself.

"Well, sir, have you had enough of it?"

"Yes, Evans, you may loose me," said the other with affected nonchalance.

"What is it like, sir? haw! haw!"

"It is as you described it, *on*comfortable; but the knowledge I have gained in it is invaluable. You shall share it."

"With all my heart, sir; you can tell me what it is like."

"Oh, no! such knowledge can never be imparted by description; you shall take your turn in the jacket."

"Not if I know it."

"What not for the sake of knowledge?"

"Oh! I can guess what it is like."

"But you will oblige me?"

"Some other way, sir, if you please."

"Besides, I will give you a guinea."

"Oh! that alters the case, sir. But only for half an hour."

"Only for half an hour."

Evans was triced up and pinned to the wall; the chaplain took out a guinea and placed it in his sight, and walked out.

In about ten minutes he returned, and there was Evans his face drawn down by pain.

"Well, how do you like it?"

"Oh! pretty well, sir, it isn't worth making an out-cry about."

"Only a little *on*comfortable."

"That is all; if it wasn't for the confounded cramp."

"Let us compare notes," said the chaplain, sitting down opposite. "I found it worse than uncomfortable. First there was a terrible sense of utter impotence, then came on racking cramps, for which there was no relief, because I could not move."

"Oh!"

"What?"

"Nothing, sir! mum — mum — dear guinea!"

"The jagged collar gave me much pain too, it rasped my poor throat like a file."

"Why the dickens didn't you tell me all this before, sir," said Evans ruefully; "it is no use now I 've been and gone into the same oven like a fool."

"I had my reasons for not telling you before; good-bye for the present."

"Don't stay over the half hour for goodness' sake, sir."

"No! adieu for the present."

He did not go far: he listened and heard the plucky Evans groan. He came hastily in.

"Courage, my fine fellow, only eight minutes more and the guinea is yours."

"How many more minutes, sir?"

"Eight."

"Then, oh! undo me, sir, if you please."

"What! forfeit the guinea for eight minutes — seven, it is only seven now.

"Hang the guinea, let me down, sir, if there 's pity in you."

"With all my heart," said the reverend gentleman, pocketing the guinea, and he loosed Evans with all speed.

The man stretched his limbs with ejaculations of pain between every stretch, and put his handkerchief on very gingerly. He looked sulky and said nothing. The other watched him keenly, for there was something about him that showed his mind was working.

"There is your guinea."

"Oh, no! I didn't earn it."

"Oh, if you think that (putting it to the lips of his pocket), let me make you a present of it" (handing it out again). Evans smiled. "It is a good servant. That little coin has got me one friend more for these poor prisoners. You don't understand me, Evans. Well, you will. Now, look at me; from this moment, sir, you and I stand on a different footing from others in this gaol. We know what we are doing when we put a prisoner in that thing; the others don't. The greater the knowledge, the greater the guilt. May we both be kept from the crime of cruelty. Good night!"

"Good night, your reverence!" said the man gently, awed by his sudden solemnity.

The chaplain retired. Evans looked after him, and then down into his own hand.

"Well I'm blowed! — Well I'm blest! — Got a guinea, though!!"

CHAPTER XV.

47 Seiten

GOVERNOR HAWES had qualities good in themselves, but ill-directed, and therefore not good in their results — determination for one. He was not a man to yield a step to opposition. He was a much greater man than Jones: he was like a torrent, to whose progress if you oppose a great stone, it brawls and struggles past it and round it and over it with more vigor than before.

"I will be master in this gaol!" was the creed of Hawes. He docked Robinson's supper one half, ditto his breakfast next

day, and set him a tremendous task of crank. Now in gaol a day's food and a day's crank are too nicely balanced to admit of the weights being tampered with. So Robinson's demi-starvation paved the way for further punishment. At one o'clock he was five hundred revolutions short, and instead of going to his dinner, he was tied up in the infernal machine. Now the new chaplain came three times into the yard that day, and the third time, about four o'clock, he found Robinson pinned to the wall, jammed in the waistcoat, and griped in the collar. His blood ran cold at sight of him, for the man had been hours in the pillory and nature was giving way.

"What has he done?"

"Refractory at crank."

"I saw him working at the crank when I came here last."

"Hasn't made his number good though."

"Humph! You have the governor's own orders?"

"Yes sir."

"How long is he to be so?"

"Till fresh orders."

"I will see the effect of this punishment on the prisoner and note it down for my report." And he took out his note-book, and leaned his back against the wall.

The simple action of taking out a note-book gave the operators a certain qualm of doubt. Fry whispered Hodges to go and tell the governor. On his return Hodges found the parties as he had left them, except Robinson — he was paler and his lips turning bluer.

"Your victim is fainting" said the chaplain sternly.

"Only shamming sir" said Fry. "Bucket, Hodges."

The bucket was brought and the contents were flung over Robinson.

The chaplain gave a cry of dismay. The turnkeys both laughed at this.

"You see he was only shamming sir," said Hodges "He is come to the moment the water touched him."

"A plain proof he was not shamming. A bucket of water thrown over any one about to faint would always bring them

to; but if a man had made up his mind to sham, he could do it in spite of water. Of course you will take him down now?"

"Not till fresh orders."

"On your peril be it if any harm befalls this prisoner — you are warned."

At this juncture Hawes came into the yard. His cheek was flushed and his eye glittered. He expected and rather hoped a collision with his reverence.

"Well, what is the matter?"

"Nothing sir; only his reverence is threatening us."

"What is he threatening you for?"

"Mr. Hawes, I told these men that I should hold them responsible if any harm came to the prisoner for their cruelty. I now tell you that he has just fainted from bodily distress caused by this infernal engine, and I hold you Mr. Hawes responsible for this man's life and well-being, which are here attacked contrary to the custom of all her Majesty's prisons, and contrary to the intention of all punishment, which is for the culprit's good, not for his injury either in soul or body."

"And what will you do?" said Hawes glaring contemptuously at the turnkeys, who wore rather a blank look.

"Mr. Hawes," replied the other gravely, "I have spoken to warn you not to threaten you."

"What I do is done with the consent of the visiting justices. They are my masters, and no one else."

"They have not seen a prisoner crucified."

"Crucified! What d'ye mean by crucified?"

"Don't you see that the torture before our eyes is crucifixion?"

"No! I don't. No nails!"

"Nails were not always used in crucifixion; sometimes cords. Don't deceive yourself with a name; nothing misleads like a false name. This punishment is falsely called the jacket — it is jacket, collar, straps, applied with cruelty. It is crucifixion minus nails but plus a collar."

"Whatever it is, the justices have seen and approved it. Haven't they, Fry?"

"That they have sir; scores of times."

"Then may heaven forgive them and direct me." And the chaplain entered the cell despondently, and bent his pitying eye steadily on the thief, who seemed to him at the moment a better companion than the three honest but cruel men.

He waited there very very sorrowful and thoughtful for more than half an hour. Then Hawes, who left the yard as soon as he had conquered his opponent, sent in Evans with an order to take Robinson to his dormitory.

The chaplain saw the man taken down from the wall, and that done went hastily to his own house; there, the contest being over, he was seized with a violent sickness and trembling. To see a fellow-creature suffer and not be able to relieve him was death to this man. He was game to the last drop of his blood so long as there was any good to be done, but action ended, a reaction came, in which he was all pity and sorrow and distress because of a fellow-creature's distress. No one that saw his firmness in the torture-cell would have guessed how weak he was within, and how stoutly his great heart had to battle against a sensitive nature and nerves tuned too high.

He gave half an hour to the weakness of nature, and then he was all duty once more.

He went first into Robinson's cell. He found him worse than ever: despair as well as hatred gleamed in his eye.

"My poor fellow, is there no way for you to avoid these dreadful punishments?"

No answer.

It is to be observed though that Robinson had no idea how far the chaplain had carried his remonstrance against his torture; that remonstrance had been uttered privately to the turnkeys and the governor. Besides the man was half stupefied when the chaplain first came there. And now he was in such pain and despair. He was like the genii confined in the chest and thrown into the water by Soliman. Had this good friend come to him at first starting, he would have thrown himself into his arms; but it came too late now: he hated all mankind. He had lost all belief in genuine kindness. Like Orlando,

He thought that all things had been savage here.

The chaplain, on the other hand, began to think that Robinson was a downright brute, and one on whom kindness was and would be wasted. Still, true to his nature, he admitted no small pique; he reasoned gently and kindly with him — very kindly. "My poor soul," said he, "have you so many friends in this hard place that you can afford to repulse one who desires to be your friend, and to do you good?"

No answer.

"Well then, if you will not let me comfort you, at least you cannot prevent my praying for you, for you are on the road to despair and will take no help."

So then this good creature did actually kneel upon the hard stones of the cell and offer a prayer — a very short but earnest one.

"Oh God, to whom all hearts are open, enlighten me that I may understand this my afflicted brother's heart, and learn how to do him good, and comfort him out of thy word — thy grace assisting me."

Robinson looked down at him with wild, staring, but lack-lustre eyes and open mouth. He rose from the floor, and casting a look of great benignity on the sullen brute, he was about to go, when he observed that Robinson was trembling in a very peculiar way.

"You are ill," said he hastily, and took a step towards him.

At this Robinson with a wild and furious gesture waived him to the door and turned his face to the wall; then this refined gentleman bowed his head, as much as to say you shall be master of this apartment and dismiss any one you do not like, and went gently away with a little sigh. And the last that he saw was Robinson trembling with averted face and eyes bent down.

Outside he met Evans, who said to him half bluntly half respectfully, "I don't like to see you going into that cell, sir; the man is not to be trusted. He is very strange."

"What do you mean? do you fear for his reason?"

"Why not, sir? We have sent a pretty many to the lunatic asylum since I was a warder here."

"Ah!"

"And some have broke prison a shorter way than that," said the man very gloomily.

The chaplain groaned — and looked at the speaker with an expression of terror. Evans noticed it and said gravely,

"You should not have come to such a place as this, sir; you are not fit for it."

"Why am I not fit for it?"

"Too good for it sir."

"You talk foolishly Mr. Evans. In the first place 'too good' is a ludicrous combination of language, in the next the worse a place is the more need of somebody being good in it to make it better. But I suppose you are one of those who think that evil is naturally stronger than good. — Delusion — springs from this; that the wicked are in earnest and the good are lukewarm. Good is stronger than evil. A single really good man in an ill place is like a little yeast in a gallon of dough; it can leaven the mass. If St. Paul or even George Whitfield had been in Lot's place all those years, there would have been more than fifty good men in Sodom; but this is out of place. I want you to give me the benefit of your experience, Evans. When I went to Robinson and spoke kindly to him he trembled all over. What on earth does that mean?"

"Trembled did he, and never spoke?"

"Yes! — Well?"

"I'm thinking, sir! I'm thinking. You didn't touch him?"

"Touch him, no; what should I touch him for?"

"Well don't do it, sir. And don't go near him. You have had an escape, you have. He was in two minds about pitching into you."

"You think it was rage! Humph! it did not give me that impression."

"Sir, did ever you go to pat a strange dog?"

"I have done myself that honour."

"Well if he wags his tail you know it is all right; but say

he puts his tail between his legs, what will he do if you pat him?"

"Bite me: experto crede."

"No! if you are ever so expert he will bite you or try. Now putting of his tail between his legs, that passes for a sign of fear in a dog, all one as trembling does in a man. Do you see what I am a driving at."

"Yes."

"Then you had better leave the spiteful brute to himself."

"No! that would be to condemn him to the worst companion he can have."

"But if he should pitch into you, sir!"

"Then he will pitch into a man twice as strong as himself, and a pupil of Bendigo. Don't be silly, Evans."

SUNDAY.

Hodges. Pity you wasn't in chapel, Mr. Fry.

Fry. Why?

Hodges. The new chaplain!

Fry. Well, what did he do?

Hodges. He waked 'em all up I can tell you. Governor couldn't get a wink all the sermon.

Fry. What did he tell you?

Hodges. Told us he loved us.

Fry. Loved who?

Hodges. All of us. Governor, turnkeys, and especially the prisoners, because they were in trouble. "My Master loves you, though he hates your sins," says he; "and I love every mother's son of you." What d'ye think of that? He loves the whole biling! Told 'em so, however.

Fry. Loves em does he? Well, that's a new lay! After all there's no accounting for tastes you know. Haw! haw!

Hodges. Haw! haw! ho!

This same Sunday afternoon soon after service the chaplain came to Robinson's cell. Evans unlocked it looking rather uneasy, and would have come in with the reverend gentleman;

but he forbade him and walked quickly into the cell, as Van Amburgh goes among his leopards and panthers. He had in his hand a little box.

"I have brought you some ointment — some nice cooling ointment" said he "to rub on your neck. I saw it was frayed by that collar."

(Pause). No answer.

"Will you let me see you use it?"

No answer.

"Come!"

No answer.

The chaplain took the box off the table, opened it, and went up to Robinson, and began quietly to apply some of the grateful soothing ointment to his frayed throat. The man trembled all over. The chaplain kept his eye calm but firm upon him, as on a dog of doubtful temper. Robinson put up his hand in a feeble sort of way to prevent the other from doing him good. His reverence took the said hand in a quiet but powerful grasp, and applied the ointment all the same. Robinson said nothing, but he was seized with this extraordinary trembling.

"Good-bye," said his reverence kindly. "I leave you the box; and see here are some tracts I have selected for you. They are not dull; there are stories in them, and the dialogue is pretty good. It is nearer nature than you will find it in works of greater pretension. Here a carpenter talks something like a carpenter, a footman something like a footman, and a factory-girl something like a girl employed in a factory. They don't all talk book — you will be able to read them. Begin with this one — 'The Wages of Sin are Death.' Good-bye!" And with these words and a kind smile he left the cell.

"From the chaplain sir" said Evans to the governor, touching his hat.

"DEAR SIR,

"Will you be good enough to send me by the bearer a copy

of the prison-rules, especially those that treat of the punishments to be inflicted on prisoners.

"I am,

"Yours, &c."

Hawes had no sooner read this innocent-looking missive, than he burst out into a tide of execrations; he concluded by saying, "Tell him I have not got a spare copy; Mr. Jones will give him his."

This answer disappointed the chaplain sadly; for Mr. Jones had left the town, and was not expected to return for some days. The hostile spirit of the governor was evident in this reply. The chaplain felt he was at war, and his was an energetic but peace-loving nature. He paced the corridor, looking both thoughtful and sad. The rough Evans eyed him with interest, and he also fell into meditation and scratched his head, invariable concomitant of thought with Evans.

It was towards evening, and his reverence still paced the corridor, downhearted at opposition and wickedness, but not without hope, and full of lovely and charitable wishes for all his flock, when the melancholy Fry suddenly came out of a prisoner's cell radiant with joy.

"What is amiss?" asked the chaplain.

"This is the matter," said Fry, and he showed him a deuce of clubs, a five of hearts, and an ace of diamonds, and so on; two or three cards of each suit. "A prisoner has been making these out of his tracts!"

"How could he do that?"

"Look here sir. He has kept a little of his gruel till it turned to paste, and then he has pasted three or four leaves of the tracts together and dried them, and then cut them into cards."

"But the colors — how could he get them?"

"That is what beats me altogether; but some of these prisoners know more than the bench of bishops."

"More evil I conclude you mean?"

"More of all sorts, sir. However I am taking them to the governor, and he will fathom it if any one can."

"Leave one red card and one black with me."

While Fry was gone the chaplain examined the cards with curiosity and that admiration of inventive resource which a superior mind cannot help feeling. There they were, a fine red deuce of hearts and a fine black four of spades — cards made without pasteboard and painted without paint. But how? that was the question. The chaplain entered upon this question with his usual zeal; but happening to reverse one of the cards, it was his fate to see on the back of it —

"THE WAGES OF SIN ARE DEATH."
A Tract.

He reddened at the sight. Here was an affront! "The sulky brute could amuse himself cutting up my tracts!"

Presently the governor came up with his satellites.

"Take No. 19 out of his cell for punishment."

At this word the chaplain's short-lived anger began to cool. They brought Robinson out.

"So you have been at it again," cried the governor in threatening terms. "Now you will tell me where you got the paint to make these beauties with?"

No answer.

"Do you hear ye sulky brute?"

No answer, but a glittering eye bent on Hawes.

"Put him in the jacket," cried Hawes with an oath.

Hodges and Fry laid each a hand upon the man's shoulder and walked him off.

"Stop!" cried Hawes suddenly; "his reverence is here, and he is not partial to the jacket."

The chaplain was innocent enough to make a graceful grateful bow to Hawes.

"Give him the dark cell for twenty-four hours," continued Hawes with a malicious grin.

The thief gave a cry of dismay and shook himself clear of the turnkeys.

"Anything but that," cried he with trembling voice.

"Oh! you have found your tongue, have you?"

"Any punishment but that," almost shrieked the despairing man. "Leave me my reason. You have robbed me of everything else. For pity's sake leave me my reason!"

The governor made a signal to the turnkeys; they stepped towards the thief. The thief sprung out of their way, his eye rolling wildly as if in search of escape. Seeing this the two turnkeys darted at him like bulldogs one on each side. This time, instead of flying, the thief was observed to move his body in a springy way to meet them; with two motions rapid as light and almost contemporaneous he caught Hodges between the eyes with his fist, and drove his head like a battering-ram into Fry's belly. Smack! ooff! and the two powerful men went down like ninepins.

In a moment all the warders within sight or hearing came buzzing round, and Hodges and Fry got up, the latter bleeding; both staring confusedly. Seeing himself hemmed in, Robinson offered no further resistance. He plumped himself down on the ground and there sat, and they had to take him up and carry him to the dark cells. But as they were dragging him along by the shoulders, he caught sight of the governor and chaplain looking down at him over the rails of corridor B. At sight of the latter the thief wrenched himself free from his attendants, and screamed to him —

"Do you see this, you in the black coat? You that told us the other day you loved us, and now stand coolly there and see me taken to the black hole to be got ready for the mad-house? D'ye hear?"

"I hear you," replied the chaplain gravely and gently.

"You called us your brothers you."

"I did, and do."

"Well then, here is one of your brothers being taken to hell before your eyes. I go there a man, but I shall come out a beast, and that cowardly murderer by your side knows it, and you have not a word to say. That is all a poor fellow gets by being your brother. My curse on you all! butchers and hypocrites!"

"Give him twelve hours more for that," roared Hawes. "— his eyes, I'll break him, — him."

"Ah," yelled the thief, "you curse me, do you? d'ye hear that? The son of a — appeals to Heaven against me! What! does this lump of dirt believe there is a God? Then there must be one." Then suddenly flinging himself on his knees, he cried, "If there is a God who pities them that suffer, I cry to him on my knees to torture you as you torture us. May your name be shame, may your life be pain, and your death loathsome! May your skin rot from your flesh, your flesh from your bones, your bones from your body, and your soul split for ever on the rock of damnation!"

"Take him away," yelled Hawes white as a sheet.

They tore him away by force, still threatening his persecutor with outstretched hand and raging voice and blazing eyes, and flung him into the dark dungeon.

"Cool yourself there, ye varmint," said Fry spitefully. Even his flesh crept at the man's blasphemies.

Meantime, the chaplain had buried his face in his hands, and trembled like a woman at the frightful blasphemies and passions of these two sinners.

"I'll make this place hell to him. He shan't need to go elsewhere," muttered Hawes aloud between his clenched teeth.

The chaplain groaned.

The governor heard him and turned on him: "Well, parson, you see he doesn't thank you for interfering between him and me. He would rather have had an hour or two of the jacket and have done with it."

The chaplain sighed. He felt weighed down in spirit by the wickedness both of Hawes and of Robinson. He saw it was in vain at that moment to try to soften the former in favour of the latter. He moved slowly away. Hawes eyed him sneeringly.

"He is down upon his luck," thought Hawes; "his own fault for interfering with me. I liked the man well enough, and showed it, if he hadn't been a fool and put his nose in my business."

Half an hour had scarce elapsed when the chaplain came back.

"Mr. Hawes, I come to you as a petitioner."

"Indeed!" said Hawes with a supercilious sneer very hard to bear.

The other would not notice it. "Pray do not think I side with a refractory prisoner if I beg you, not to countermand, but to modify Robinson's punishment."

"What for?"

"Because he cannot bear so many hours of the dark cell."

"Nonsense, sir."

"Is it too much to ask that you will give him six hours a-day for four days, instead of twenty-four at a stretch?"

"I don't know whether it is too much for you to ask. I should say by what I see of you that nothing is; but it is too much for me to grant. The man has earned punishment; he has got it, and you have nothing to do with it at all."

"Yes, I have the care of his soul, and how can I do his soul good if he loses his reason?"

"Stuff! his reason's safe enough, what little he has."

"Do not say stuff! Do not be rash where the stake is so great, or confident where you have no knowledge. You have never been in the dark cell, Mr. Hawes; I have; and I assure you it tried my nerves to the uttermost. I had many advantages over this poor man. I went in of my own accord, animated by a desire of knowledge, supported by the consciousness of right, my memory enriched by the reading of five-and-twenty years, on which I could draw in the absence of external objects; yet so dreadful was the place that, had I not been fortified by communion with my omnipresent God, I do think my reason would have suffered in that thick darkness and solitude. I repeated thousands of lines of Homer, Virgil, and the Greek dramatists; then I came to Shakespeare, Corneille, Racine, and Victor Hugo; then I tried to think of a text and compose a sermon; but the minutes seemed hours, leaden hours, and they weighed my head down and my heart down, and so did the Egyptian darkness, till I sought refuge in prayer, and there I found it."

"You pulled through it and so will he; and now I think of it, it is too slight a punishment to give a refractory blaspheming villain no worse than a pious gentleman took on him for sport," sneered Hawes. "You heard his language to me, the blaspheming dog?"

"I did! I did! and therefore pray you to pity his sinful soul exasperated by the severities he has already undergone. Oh, sir! the wicked are more to be pitied than the good; and the good can endure trials that wreck the wicked. I would rather see a righteous man thrown into that dismal dungeon than this poor blaspheming sinner."

"The deuce you would!"

"For the righteous man has a strong tower that the sinner lacks. He is fit to battle with solitude and fearful darkness; an unseen light shines upon his soul, an unseen hand sustains him. The darkness is no darkness to him, for the Sun of righteousness is nigh. In the deep solitude he is not alone, for good angels whisper by his side. 'Yea, though he walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet shall he fear no evil, for God is with him; his rod and his staff they comfort him.' The wicked have not this comfort: to them darkness and solitude must be too horrible. Satan — not God — is their companion. The ghosts of their past crimes rise and swell the present horror. Remorse and despair are added to the double gloom of solitude and darkness. You don't know what you are doing when you shut up a poor lost sinner of excitable temperament in that dreadful hole. It is a wild experiment on a human frame. Pray be advised, pray be warned, pray let your heart be softened, and punish the man as he deserves — but do not destroy him! oh do not! do not destroy him!"

Up to this moment Hawes had worn a quiet malicious grin. At last his rage broke through this veil. He turned round black as night upon the chaplain, who was bending towards him in earnest gasping yet sweet and gentle supplication.

"The vagabond insulted me before all my servants, and that is why you take his part. He would send me to hell if he had the upper hand. I've got the upper hand, and so he shall taste

it instead of me, till he goes down on his marrowbones to me with my foot on his viper's tongue. — him!"

"Oh! do not curse him, above all now that he is in trouble and defenceless."

"Let me alone, sir, and I'll let you," retorted Hawes savagely. "If I curse him, you can pray for him. I don't hinder you. Good night;" and Mr. Hawes turned his back very rudely.

"I will pray for him — and for you!"

"Ugh!"

So then the chaplain retired sorrowfully to his private room, and here, sustained no longer by action, his high-tuned nature gave way. A cold languor came over him. He locked the door that no one might see his weakness, and then succumbing to nature, he fell first into a sickness and then into a trembling, and more than once hysterical tears gushed from his eyes in the temporary prostration of his spirit and his powers.

Such are the great. Men know their feats but not their struggles!

Meantime Robinson lay in the dark cell with a morsel of bread and water, and no bed or chair, that hunger and unrest might co-operate with darkness and solitude to his hurt. To this horrid abode it is now our fate to follow a thief and a blasphemer. We must pass his gloomy portal, over which might have been inscribed what Dante has written over the gates of hell —

"ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE — ABANDON HOPE!!"

At six o'clock Robinson was thrust in, and his pittance of bread and water with him; the door, which fitted like mosaic, was closed. The steps retreated carrying away hope and human kind; there was silence, and the man shivered in the thick black air that seemed a fluid, not an atmosphere.

When the door closed his heart was yet beating with rage and wild desire of vengeance. He nursed this rage as long as he could, but the thick darkness soon cooled him and cowed him. He sat down upon the floor, he ate his pittance very slowly two mouthfuls a minute. "I will be an hour eating it"

said he, "and then an hour will have passed." He thought he was an hour eating it, but in reality he was scarce twenty minutes. The blackness seemed to smother him. "I will shut it out," said he. He took out his handkerchief and wrapped his head in it. "What a weak fool I am" cried he, "when we are asleep it does not matter to us light or dark, I will go to sleep." He lay down, his head still wrapped up, and tried to sleep. So passed the first hour.

Second hour. He rose from the stone floor after a vain attempt to sleep. "Oh no!" cried he, "sleep is for those who are well and happy, and who could enjoy themselves as well awake, it won't come to me to save a poor wretch from despair. I must tire myself, and I am too cold to sleep: here goes for a warm." He groped to the wall, and keeping his hand on it went round and round like a caged tiger. "Hawes hopes to drive me to Bedlam. I'll do the best I can for myself to spite him. May he lie in a place narrower than this, and almost as dark, with his jaw down and his toes up before the year is out, curse him!" But the poor wretch's curses quavered away into sobs and tears. "Oh! what have I done to be used so as I am here? They drive me to despair, then drive me to hell for despairing. Patience, or I shall go mad. Patience! Patience!" This hour was passed cursing and weeping, and groping for warmth, and fatigue — in vain.

Third hour. The man sat rocking himself to and fro, trying not to think of anything: for now the past too was coming with all its weight upon him; every minute he started up as if an adder had stung him; crawled about his cell seeking refuge in motion, and finding none; then he threw himself on the floor and struggled for sleep. Sleep would not come so sought; and now his spirits were quite cowed. He would cringe to Hawes; he would lick the dust at his feet to get out of this horrible place; who could he get to go and tell the governor he was *penitent.* He listened at the door; he rapped; no one came. He put his ear to the ground and listened; no sound — blackness, silence, solitude. "They have left me here to die," shrieked the despairing man, and he flung himself on the floor

and writhed upon the hard stone. "It must be morning, and no one comes near me; this is my tomb;" fear came upon him, and trembling and a cold sweat bedewed his limbs; and once more the past rushed over him with tenfold force; days of happiness and comparative innocence now forfeited for ever. His whole life whirled round before his eyes in a panorama, scene dissolving into scene with inconceivable rapidity; thus passed more than two hours; and now remorse and memory concentrated themselves on one dark spot in this man's history. "She is in the tomb," cried he, "and all through me, and that is why I am here. This is my grave. Do you see me Mary? — she is here. The spirits of the dead can go anywhere." Then he trembled and cried for help. Oh! for a human voice or a human footstep! — none. His nerves and senses were now shaken. He cried aloud most piteously for help, "Mr. Fry, Mr. Hodges, help! help! help! The cell is full of the dead, and devils are buzzing round me waiting to carry me away — they won't wait much longer. He fancied something supernatural passed him like a wind; he struck wildly at it. He flung himself madly against the door to escape it; he fell back bruised and bleeding, and lay a while in stupor.

Sixth hour. Robinson was going mad. The blackness and solitude and silence and remorse and despair were more than his excitable nature could bear any longer. He prayed Hawes to come and abuse him. He prayed Fry to bring the jacket to him. "Let me but see a man, or hear a man!" He screamed, and cursed, and prayed, and dashed himself on the ground, and ran round the cell wounding his hands and his face. Suddenly he turned deadly calm. He saw he was going mad — better die than so — "I shall be a beast soon — I will die a man" — he tore down his collar — he had on cotton stockings, he took one off — he tied it in a loose knot round his naked throat — he took a firm hold with each hand.

And now he was quiet, and sorrowed calmly. A man to die in the prime of life for want of a little light and a word from a human creature to keep him from madness.

Then as the thought returned, clenching his teeth, he

gathered the ends of the stocking and prepared with one fierce pull to save his shaken reason and end his miserable days. Now at this awful moment, while his hands griped convulsively the means of death, a quiet tap on the outside of the cell door suddenly rang through the dead stillness, and a moment after a human word forced its way into the cave of madness and death —

"BROTHER!"

When this strange word pierced the thick door, and came into the hell-cave feeble as though wafted over water from a distance, yet distinct as a bell and bright as a sun-beam, Robinson started, and quaked with fear and doubt. Did it come from the grave that unearthly tone and word?

Still holding the ends of the stocking he cried out wildly in a loud but quavering voice:

"Who — o — o calls Thomas Sinclair brother?" The distant voice rang back —

"Francis Eden!"

"Ah! — where are you, Francis Eden?"

"Here! within a hand's-breadth of you;" and Mr. Eden struck the door. "Here!"

"There! are you there?" and Robinson struck the door on his side.

"Yes, here!"

"Ha! don't go away, pray don't go away!"

"I don't mean to — take courage — calm your fears — a brother is close by you!"

"A brother! — again! now I know who it must be, but there is no telling voices here."

"What were you doing?"

"What was I doing? Oh! don't ask me — I was going mad, — where are you?"

"Here!" (rap.)

"And I am here close opposite; you won't go away yet awhile?"

"Not till you bid me, — compose yourself — do you hear me? — calm yourself, compose yourself!"

"I will try, sir! — thank you, sir. — I will try, — what o'clock is it?"

"Half-past twelve."

"Night or day?"

"Night."

Friday night, or Saturday?"

"Thursday."

"How came you to be in the prison at this hour?"

"I was anxious about you."

"You were what?"

"Fearful about you."

"What! did you give up your sleep only to see after me?"

"Are you not glad I came?"

"Is a shipwrecked sailor glad when a rope is flung him? I hold on to life and reason by you!"

"Is not this better than sleeping? — Did you speak?"

"No! I am thinking! I am trying to make you out. Were you ever a p—— (hum)"

"Was I ever what? the door is so thick!"

"Oh! nothing sir; you seem to know what a poor fellow suffers in the dark cell."

"I have been in it!"

"Whee-ugh-wheet! — what a shame! what did they put you in for?"

"They didn't put me in, I went in."

"The devil you did!" muttered the immured.

"What? speak out."

"Nothing your reverence," bawled Robinson. "Why did you go into such a cur — into such a hole?"

"It was my duty to know what a fellow-creature suffers there, lest, through inexperience, I might be cruel. Ignorance is the mother of cruelty!"

"I hear you sir."

"And cruelty is a fearful crime in His eyes, whose servant I am."

"I am thinking, sir; I am putting two or three things together — I see —"

"Speak more slowly and articulately."

"I will; I see what you are now — you are a Christian."

"I hope so!"

"I might have guessed as much, and I did suspect it; but I couldn't know, I had nothing to go by. I never fell in with a Christian before."

"Where did you go to look for them," asked Mr. Eden his mouth twitching.

"I have been in many countries, and my eyes open; and I've heard and read of Christians, and I've met hypocrites: but never met a living Christian till to-night;" — then, after a pause, "Sir, I want to apologize to you!"

"What for?"

"For my ignorant and ungrateful conduct to you in my cell."

"Let bygones be bygones!"

"Could you forgive me, sir?"

"You punished yourself, not me; I forgive you."

"Thank you."

Robinson was silent.

After a pause, Mr. Eden tapped.

"What are you doing?"

"I am thinking over your goodness to me."

"Are you better now?"

"That I am. The place was a tomb; since you came it is only a closet. I can't see your face — I feel it though; and your voice is music to me. Have you nothing to say to me, sir?"

"I have many things to say to you; but this is not the time. I want you to sleep."

"Why, sir?"

"Sleep is the balm of mind and body; you need sleep."

"And you, sir?"

"I shall sit here."

"You will take your death of cold."

"No, I have my great coat."

There was a long pause.

Robinson tapped. "Sir, grant me a favour."

"What is it?"

"Go home to your bed."

"What, leave you?"

"Yes."

"Shall you not miss me?"

"Yes, sir, but you must go. The words you have spoken will stay with me while you are gone."

"I shall stay."

"No, sir, no! I can't bear it — it isn't fair!"

"What do you mean?"

"It isn't fair that a gentleman like you should be kept shivering at an unfortunate man's door like me. — I am not quite good for nothing, sir, and this will disgrace me in my own eyes."

"I am on the best side of the door; don't trouble your head about me."

"I shouldn't, sir, if you had not about me — but kindness begets kindness; — go to your comfortable bed."

Mr. Eden hesitated.

"You will make me more unhappy than I am, if you stay here in the cold."

Now at the beginning of this argument Mr. Eden was determined not to go; but on reflection he made up his mind to, for this reason: "This," said he to himself, "is an act of uncommon virtue and self-denial in this poor fellow. I must not baulk it, for it will be good for his soul; it is a step on the right road. This good and I might say noble act is a foundation-stone on which I ought to try and build an honest man and a Christian."

"Well then as you are so considerate I will go."

"Thank you."

"Can I do nothing for you before I go?"

"No, sir; you have done all a man can; yes, you can do something — you spoke a word to me when you came; it is a word I am not worthy of, but still if you could leave me that word it would be a companion for me."

"Brother!"

"Thank you."

When he heard Mr. Eden's steps grow fainter and fainter, and at last inaudible, Robinson groaned; the darkness turned blacker and the solitude more desolate than ever.

Mr. Eden paced the corridors in meditation. "It is never too late to mend!" said he. "This man seemed an unredeemable brute: yet his heart was to be touched by persevering kindness; and once touched, how much of goodness left in his fallen nature — genuine gratitude, and even the embers of self-respect. 'I hate myself for my conduct in the cell; it would disgrace me in my own eyes if I let you shiver at my door.' Poor fellow, my heart yearns towards him for that. 'Go, or you will make me more unhappy.' Why that was real delicacy. I must not let him suffer for it. In an hour I will go back to him. If he is asleep, well and good; if not, there I stay till morning."

He went to his room and worked; the hour soon glided by to him; not so to the poor prisoner. At two in the morning Mr. Eden came softly back to the dark cell to see whether Robinson was asleep. He scratched the door with a key. A loud, unsteady voice cried out, "What is that?"

"It is I, brother."

"Why are you not in your bed?"

"I couldn't sleep for anxiety. Come, chat with me till you feel sleepy. How did you color those cards?"

"I found a coal and a bit of brick in the yard. I pounded them and mixed them with water, and laid them on with a brush I had made and hid."

"Very ingenious! Are you cold?"

"No."

"Because your voice trembles."

"Does it?"

"What is the matter?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No! But I remember you used to tremble when I spoke to you in the cell. Why was that? Have your nerves been shaken by ill-usage my poor fellow?"

"Oh, no! it is not that."

"Tell me then!"

"Oh, sir! you know all a poor fellow feels. You can guess what made me tremble, and makes me tremble now, like an aspen I do."

"No, indeed! pray tell me! Are we not friends?"

"The best ever I had, or ever shall."

"Then tell me."

"I'll try; but it is a long story, and the door is so thick."

"Ah! but I hear you better; I have got used to your voice."

"Well, sir; but I've no words to speak to you as I ought. Why did I use to tremble when you used to speak kind to me? Sir, when I first came here I hadn't a bad heart. I was a felon, but I was a man. They turned me to a brute by cruelty and wrong. You came too late, sir. It wasn't Tom Robinson you found in that cell. I had got to think all men were devils. They poisoned my soul! I hated God and man!

"The very chaplain before you said good kind words in church, but out of it he was Hawes's tool! Then you came and spoke good kind words. My heart ran to meet them; then it drew back all shivering and said, this is a hypocrite too! I was a fool and a villain to think so for a moment, and perhaps I didn't at bottom, but I was turned to gall.

"Oh, sir! you don't know what it is to lose hope, to find out that do what you will you can't be right, can't escape abuse and hatred and torture. Treat a man like a dog and you make him one!

"But you came: your voice, your face, your eye, were all pity and kindness. I hoped, but I was afraid to hope! I had seen but two things — butchers and hypocrites. Then I had sworn in my despair never to speak again, and I wouldn't speak to you. Fool! — How kind and patient you were. Sir, once when you left me you sighed as you closed the cell door. I came after you to beg your pardon, when it was too late; indeed I did, upon my honour. And when you would rub the ointment on my throat in spite of my ingratitude, I could have worshipped you, but my pride held me back like an iron hand. Why did I

tremble? that was the devil and my better part fighting inside me for the upper hand. And another thing, I did not dare speak to you. I felt that if I did I should give way altogether, like a woman or a child; I feel so now. For, oh! can't you guess what it must be to a poor fellow when all the rest are savage as wolves, and one is kind as a woman? Oh! you have been a friend to me. You don't know all you have done; you have saved my life. When you came here a stocking was knotted round my throat; a minute later the man you call your brother — God bless you — would have been no more. There, I never meant you should know that, and now it has slipped out. My benefactor! my kind friend! my angel! for you are an angel and not a man. What can I do to show you what I feel? What can I say? There, I tremble all over now as I did then. I'm choking for words, and the cruel thick door keeps me from you. I want to put my neck under your foot, for I can't speak. All I say isn't worth a button. Words! words! words! give me words that mean something. They shan't keep me from you, they shan't! they shan't! My stubborn heart was between us once, now there is only a door. Give me your hand! give me your hand before my heart bursts."

"There! there!"

"Hold it there!"

"Yes! yes!"

"My lips are here close opposite it. I am kissing your dear hand. There! there! there! I bless you! I love you! I adore you! I am kissing your hand, and I am on my knees blessing you and kissing. Oh, my heart! my heart! my heart!"

There was a long silence, disturbed only by sobs that broke upon the night from the black cell. Mr. Eden leaned against the door with his hand in the same place; the prisoner kissed the spot from time to time.

"Your reverence is crying too!" was the first word spoken, very gently.

"How do you know?"

"You don't speak, and my heart tells me you are shedding a tear for me; there was only that left to do for me."

Then there was another silence, and true it was that the good man and the bad man mingled some tears through the massy door. These two hearts pierced it, and went to and fro through it, and melted in spite of it, and defied and utterly defeated it.

"Did you speak, dear sir?"

"No! not for the world! Weep on my poor sinning, suffering brother. Heaven sends you this blessed rain; let it drop quietly on your parched soul, refresh you, and shed peace on your troubled heart. Drop gentle dew from heaven upon his spirit; prepare the dry soil for the good seed!"

And so the bad man wept abundantly; to him old long-dried sources of tender feeling were now unlocked by Christian love and pity.

The good man shed a gentle tear or two of sympathy; of sorrow too, to find so much goodness had been shut up driven in and well-nigh quenched for ever in the poor thief.

To both these holy drops were as the dew of Hermon on their souls.

O lacrymarum fons tenero sacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo; quater
Felix in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te pia Nympha sensit.

Robinson was the first to break silence.

"Go home, sir, now; you have done your work, you have saved me. I feel at peace. I could sleep. You need not fear to leave me now."

"I shall sit here until you are asleep, and then I will go. Do you hear this?" and he scratched the door with his key.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, when I do so and you do not tap in reply I shall know you are asleep."

Robinson, whose heart was now so calmed, felt his eyes get heavier and heavier. After awhile he spoke to Mr. Eden but received no reply.

"Perhaps he is dozing," thought Robinson. "I won't disturb him."

Then he composed himself, lying close to the door to be near his friend.

After awhile Mr. Eden scratched the door with his key. There was no answer; then he rose softly and went to his own room.

Robinson slept. Slept like an infant after this feverish day. His body lay still in a hole dark and almost as narrow as the grave, but his spirit had broken prison. Tired nature's sweet restorer descended like a dove upon his wet eye-lids, and fanned him with her downy wings, and bedewed the hot heart and smarting limbs with her soothing vivifying balm.

At six o'clock Evans went and opened Robinson's cell door. He was on the ground sleeping, with a placid smile on his face. Evans looked down at him with a puzzled air. Whilst contemplating him he was joined by Fry.

"Ugh!" grunted that worthy, "seems to agree with him." And he went off and told Hawes.

Directly after chapel, which he was not allowed to attend, came an order to take Robinson out of the dark cell and put him on the crank.

The disciplinarian, defeated in his attempt on Robinson, was compensated by a rare stroke of good fortune — a case of real refractoriness; even this was not perfect, but it answered every purpose.

In one of the labor cells they found a prisoner seated with the utmost coolness across the handle of his crank. He welcomed his visitants with a smile, and volunteered a piece of information — "it is all right."

Now it couldn't be all right, for it was impossible he could have done his work in the time. Hawes looked at the face of the crank to see how much had been done, and lo! the face was broken and the index had disappeared. As Mr. Hawes examined the face of the crank, the prisoner leered at him with a mighty silly cunning.

This personage's name was Carter; it may be as well to explain him. Go into any large English gaol on any day in any year you like, you shall find there two or three prisoners who

have no business to be in such a place at all — half-witted, half-responsible creatures, missent to gaol by shallow judges contentedly executing those shallow laws they ought to modify and stigmatize until civilization shall come and correct them.

These imbeciles, if the nation itself was not both half-witted and a thoughtless ignorant dunce in all matters relating to such a trifle (Heaven forgive us!) as its prisons, would be taken to the light not plunged into darkness; would not be shut up alone with their own no-minds to accumulate the stupidity that has undone them, but forced into collision with better understandings; would not be closeted in a gaol, but in a mild asylum with a school attached.

The offences of these creatures is seldom theft, hardly ever violence. This idiot was sentenced to two years' separate confinement for being the handle with which two knaves had passed base coin. Sentenced by his own brother sitting on an English judgment-seat with horse-hair outside his skull and wool in to 730 days' prison — in other words my Lord Noodle cut the cat's paw off at the shoulder because the monkey took chestnuts with it and ate them all to his own cheek. The same day this same animal sentenced a scoundrel who was not an idiot, and had beaten and kicked his wife to the edge of the grave — to fourteen years' imprisonment? no: — to four months. Beast!

Mr. Carter had observed that Fry looked at a long iron needle on the face of the crank, and that when he had been lazy somehow this needle pointed out the fact to Fry. He could not understand it, but then the world was brimful of things he could not understand one bit. It was no use standing idle till he could comprehend rerum naturam — bother it. In short, Mr. Carter did what is a dangerous thing for people in his condition to do, he cogitated, and the result of this unfamiliar process was that he broke the glass of the crank face, took out the index, shied the pieces of glass carefully over the wall, secreted the needle, took about ten turns of the crank, and then left off and sat down exulting secretly.

When they came as usual and went to consult the accusing

needle, he chuckled and leered with foolish cunning. But his chuckle died away into a most doleful quaver when he found himself surrounded, jacketed, strapped, and collared. He struggled furiously at first, like some wild animal in a net; and when resistance was hopeless the poor half-witted creature lifted up his voice, and uttered loud wild-beast cries of pain and terror that rang through the vast prison.

These horrible cries brought all the warders to the spot, and Mr. Eden. There he found Carter howling, and Hawes in front of him, cursing and threatening him with destruction, if he did not hold his noise.

He might as well have suspended a dog from a branch by the hind leg, and told him he mustn't howl.

This sight drove a knife through Mr. Eden's heart. He stood amongst them white as a sheet. He could not speak; but his pale face was a silent protest against this enormity. His look of horror and righteous indignation chilled and made uneasy the inquisitors, all but Hawes.

"Hold your noise, ye howling brute, or I'll" — and he clapped his hand before Carter's mouth.

Carter seized his thumb with his teeth, and bit it to the bone. Hawes yelled with pain, and strove furiously to get his hand away, but Carter held it like a tiger. Hawes capered with agony, and yelled again. The first to come to his relief was Mr. Eden. He was at the biped's side in a moment, and pinched his nose. Now as his lungs were puffing like a blacksmith's bellows his mouth flew open the moment the other breathing-hole was stopped, and Hawes got his bleeding hand away.

He held it with the other and shook it, and moaned dismally like a great girl; but suddenly looking up he saw a half grin upon the faces of his myrmidons.

For the contrast of a man telling another who was in pain not to make a row, and the next moment making an abominable row himself for no better reason, was funny.

For all this occurred ten times quicker in action than in relation.

Mr. Hawes's conversion to noise came rapidly in a single sentence after this fashion.

"— you! hold your infernal noise Oh! Augh! Ah! EE! EE! Aah! Oh! Oh! EE! EE! OO! OO! OO! OO! OO! OO!"

So Fry and Hodges and Evans and Davis grinned.

For all these men had learned from Hawes to laugh at pain — (another's). One man alone did not even smile. He was an observer, and did not expect any one to be great at bearing pain who was rash in inflicting it; moreover he suffered with all who suffer. He was sorry for the pilloried biped, and sorry for the bitten brute.

He then gave them another lesson. "All you want the poor thing to do is to suffer in silence. Withdraw twenty yards from him." He set the example by retreating, the others, Hawes included, being off their guard, obeyed mechanically the superior spirit.

Carter's cries died away into a whimpering moan. The turnkeys looked at one another, and with a sort of commencement of respect at Mr. Eden.

"Parson knows more than we do."

Hawes interrupted this savagely.

"Ye fools! couldn't you see it was the sight of your ugly faces made him roar, not the jacket? Keep him there 'till further orders;" and he went off to plaister his wounded hand.

Mr. Eden sat down and covered his face. He was as miserable as this vile world can ever make a man who lives for a better. The good work he was upon was so difficult in itself, and those who ought to have helped fought against him.

When with intelligence, pain, and labour he had built up a little good, Hawes was sure to come and knock it down again; and this was the way to break his heart.

He had been taking such pains with this poor biped; he had played round his feeble understanding to find by what door a little wisdom and goodness could be made to enter him. At last he had found that pictures pleased him and excited him, and awakened all the intelligence he had.

Mr. Eden had a vast collection of engravings and photographs. His plan with Carter was to show him some engraving presenting a fact or anecdote. First he would put under his eyes a cruel or unjust action. He would point out the signs of suffering in one of the figures. Carter would understand this because he saw it. Then Mr. Eden would excite his sympathy. "Poor so and so," would Mr. Eden say in a pitying voice. "Poor so and so," would biped Carter echo. After several easy lessons he would find him a picture of some more moderate injustice, and so raise the shadow of a difficulty, and draw a little upon Carter's understanding as well as sympathy. Then would come pictures of charity, of benevolence, and other good actions. These and their effects upon the several figures Carter was invited to admire, and so on to a score of topics. The first thing was to make Carter think and talk, which he did in the happy-go-lucky way of his class, uttering nine mighty simple remarks, and then a bit of superlative wisdom, or something that sounded like it. And when he had shot his random bolts, Mr. Eden would begin, and treat each picture as a text, and utter much wisdom on it in simple words.

He found Carter's mind in a state of actual lethargy. He got it out of that; he created an excitement and kept it up. He got at his little bit of mind through his senses. Honor to all the great arts! The limit to their beauty and their usefulness has never yet been found and never will. Painting was the golden key this thinker held to the Bramah lock of an imbecile's understanding — the ponderous wards were beginning to revolve — when a blockhead came and did his best to hamper the lock.

In English, Eden was gradually making the biped a man: comes Hawes and turns him to a brute. The whimpering moans of Carter were thoroughly animal, and the poor biped's degradation as well as his suffering made Mr. Eden wretched.

To-day for the first time the chaplain saw a prisoner crucified without suffering that peculiar physical weakness which I have more than once noticed. Poor soul, he was so pleased at this that he thanked Heaven for curing him of that contemptible infirmity, so he called it. But he had to pay for this victory: he

never felt so sick at heart as now. He turned for relief to the duties he had in his zeal added to a chaplain's acknowledged routine: he visited his rooms and all his rational workpeople.

The sight of all the good he was doing by teaching the sweets of anti-theft was always a cordial to him.

Almost the last cell he visited was Thomas Robinson's. The man had been fretting and worrying himself to know why he did not come before. As soon as the door was opened he took an eager step to meet him, then stopped irresolutely, and blushed and beamed with pleasure mixed with a certain confusion. He looked volumes, but waited out of respect for his reverence to address him.

Mr. Eden held out his hand to him with a frank manner and kind smile. At this Robinson tried to speak but could only stammer, something seemed to rise in his throat and block up the exit of words.

"Come," said Mr. Eden, "no more of that; be composed, and I will sit down, for I am tired."

Robinson brought him his stool, and Mr. Eden sat down.

They conversed, and after some kind inquiries, Mr. Eden came to the grand purport of this visit, which, to the surprise and annoyance of Robinson, was to reprobate severely the curses and blasphemies he had uttered as they were dragging him to the dark cell. And so threatening and severe was Mr. Eden, that at last poor Robinson whined out, —

"Sir, you will make me wish I was in the dark cell again, for then you took my part; now you are against me."

"There is a time for everything under the sun. When you were in the dark cell, consolation and indulgence were the best things for your soul, and I gave them you as well as I could. You are not in the dark cell now, and out of the same love for you, I tell you that if God took you this night the curses you uttered yesterday would destroy you to all eternity."

"I hope not, your reverence!"

"Away with delusive hopes, they war against the soul. I tell you those curses that came from a tongue set on fire of Hell have placed you under the ban of Heaven. Are you not this

Hawes's brother, his brother every way — two unforgiven sinners?"

"Yes, sir," said Robinson, truckling, "of course I know I am a great sinner, a desperate sinner, not worthy to be in your reverence's company. But I hope," he added with sudden sincerity and spirit, "you don't think I am such an out-and-out scoundrel as that Hawes."

"Mr. Hawes would tell me you are the scoundrel and he a zealous servant of morality and order; but these comparisons are out of place. I am now deferring not to the world's judgment but to a higher, in whose eye Mr. Hawes and you stand on a level — two unforgiven sinners; if not forgiven you will both perish everlastingly, and to be forgiven you must forgive. God is very forgiving — he forgives the best of us a thousand vile offences. But he never forgives unconditionally. His terms are our repentance and our forgiveness of those who offend us one-millionth part as deeply as we offend him. Therefore in praying against Hawes you have prayed against yourself. Give me your slate. No; take it yourself. Write —"

Robinson took his pencil with alacrity. He wrote a beautiful hand, and wanted to show off this accomplishment to his reverence.

"'Forgive us our sins as we forgive them that trespass against us.'"

"It is down, sir."

"Now particularize."

"Particularize, your reverence?"

"Write under 'us' 'our' and 'we,' 'me' 'my' and 'I;' respectively."

"All right, sir."

"Now, under 'them' write 'Mr. Hawes.'"

"Ugh; yes, your reverence, 'Mr. Hawes.'"

"And under the last four words write, 'his cruelty to me.'"

This was wormwood to Mr. Robinson. "'His cruelty to me.'"

"Now read your work out."

"'Forgive me my sins as I forgive Mr. Hawes his cruelty to me.'"

"Now ponder over those words. Keep them before your eye here, and try at least and bow your stubborn heart to them. Fall on them and be broken, or they will fall on you and grind you to powder." He concluded in a terrible tone; then, seeing Robinson abashed, more from a notion he was in a rage with him than from any deeper sentiment, he bade him farewell kindly as ever.

"I know," said he, "I have given you a hard task. We can all gabble the Lord's Prayer, but how few have ever prayed it! But at least try, my poor soul, and I will set you an example. I will pray for my brother Robinson and my brother Hawes, and I shall pray for them all the more warmly, that at present one is a blaspheming thief and the other a pitiless blockhead."

The next day being Sunday, Mr. Eden preached two sermons that many will remember all their lives. The first was against theft and all the shades of dishonesty. I give a few of his topics: the dry bones he covered with flesh and blood and beauty. The tendency of theft was to destroy all moral and social good. For were it once to prevail so far as to make property insecure, industry would lose heart, enterprise and frugality be crushed, and at last the honest turn thieves in self-defence. Nearly every act of theft had a baneful influence on the person robbed.

Here he quoted by name instances of industrious, frugal persons, whose savings having been stolen, they had lost courage and good habits of years' standing, and had ended ill. Then he gave them a simile. These great crimes are like great trunk railways. They create many smaller ones: some flow into them; some out of them. Drunkenness generally precedes an act of theft; drunkenness always follows it; lies flow from it in streams, and perjury rushes to its defence.

It breeds, too, other vices that punish it, but never cure it — prodigality and general loose living. The thief is never the richer by this vile act which impoverishes his victim; for the money obtained by this crime is wasted in others. The folly of theft; its ill economy. What high qualities are laid out to their greatest disadvantage by the thief; acuteness, watchfulness, sagacity, determination, tact. These virtues, coupled with

integrity, enrich thousands every year. How many thieves do they enrich? How many thieves are a shilling a-year the better for the hundreds of pounds that come dishonestly into their hands?

"In — gaol (Mr. Lepel's), there is now a family that have stolen, first and last, property worth eighteen thousand pounds. The entire possessions of this family are now two pair of shoes. The clothes they stand in belong to Government; their own had to be burned, so foul were they. Eighteen thousand pounds had they stolen — to be beggars, and this is the rule, not the exception, as you all know. Why is this your fate and your end? Because a mightier power than man's has determined that thieving shall not thrive. The curse of God is upon theft!"

Then came life-like pictures of the honest man and the thief. The one with an eye that faced you, with a conscious dignity, and often a cheerful countenance; the other with a shrinking eye, a conscious meanness, and never with a smile from the heart; sordid, sly, and unhappy — for theft is misery. No wonder this crime degrades a man when it degrades the very animals. Look at a dog who has stolen. Before this, when he met his master or any human friend he used to run up to greet them with wagging tail and sparkling eye. Now see him: at sight of any man, he crawls meanly away, with cowering figure and eye askant, the living image of the filthy sin he has committed. He feels he has no longer a right to greet a man, for he is a thief.

And here the preacher gathered images, facts, and satire, and hurled a crushing hailstorm of scorn upon the sordid sin. Then he attacked the present situation (his invariable custom).

"Not all the inmates of a gaol were equally guilty on their arrival there. A large proportion of felons were orphans or illegitimate children; others, still more unfortunate, were the children of criminals who had taught them crime from their cradles. Great excuses were to be made for the general mass of criminals; excuses that the ignorant, shallow world could not be expected to make; but the balance of the Sanctuary is not like the world's clumsy balance; it weighs all men to a hair.

Excuses will be made for many of you in Heaven up to a certain point. And what is that point? The day of your entrance into prison. But now plead no more the ill example of parents and friends, for here you are cut off from it.

"Plead no more that you cannot read, for here you have been taught to read.

"Plead no more the dreadful power of vicious habits, that began when you were unguarded; for those habits have now been cut away from you by force, and better habits substituted.

"Plead no more ignorance of God's Word, for here day by day it is poured into your ears.

"Your situation has other less obvious advantages. Here you are little exposed to the soul's most dangerous enemy — self-deception. The world destroys thousands of sinners by flattery. Half the great sinners upon earth are what is called respectable. The world tells them they are good — they believe it, and so die as they have lived, and are lost eternally. The world, intending to be more unkind to you, is far more kind; it tells *you* the truth — that you are desperate sinners. Here then, where everything opens your eyes, oh! fight not against yourselves. Repent, or fearful will be the fresh guilt heaped upon your heads! Even these words of mine must do you good or do you harm. I tremble when I tell you so. It is an awful thing to think." The preacher paused. "You know that I love you — that I would give my life to save one soul of all those I see before me now! Have pity on me and on yourselves! Let me not be so unfortunate as to add to your guilt — I, whose heart yearns to do you good! Oh, my poor brothers and sisters, do not pity yourselves so much less than I pity you — do not love yourselves so much less than I love you! Why will ye die? Repent, and be forgiven!

"Some of you profess attachment to me — some talk of gratitude. There are some of my poor brothers and sisters in this gaol that say to me, 'Oh, I wish I could do something for you, sir!' Perhaps you have noticed that I have never answered these professions. Well, I will answer them now once for all."

While the preacher paused, there was a movement observed amongst the prisoners.

"Would you make me very—very sad? Remain impenitent! Would you make me happy? Repent, and turn to God! Not to-morrow, or next day, but on your knees in your own cells the moment you go hence. You don't know, you can't dream what happiness you will confer on me if you do this!"

Then suddenly opening his arms, with wonderful grace and warmth and energy he cried, "My poor wandering sheep, come — come to the heavenly fold! Let me gather you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing. You are my anxiety, my terror — be my joy, my consolation here, and hereafter the brightest jewels in my heavenly crown."

In this strain he soared higher than my poor earth-clogged wings can follow him. He had lashed sin severely, so he had earned a right to show his love for the sinner. Gracious words of entreaty and encouragement gushed from him in a crystal stream with looks and tones of more than mortal charity. Men might well doubt was this a man, or was it Christianity speaking? Christianity, born in a stable, was she there, illuminating a gaol? For now for a moment or two the sacred orator was more than mortal; so high above earth was his theme, so great his swelling words. He rose, he dilated to heroic size, he flamed with sacred fire: his face shone like an angel's, and no silver trumpet or deep-toned organ could compare with his thundering, pealing, melting voice, that poured the soul of love and charity and heaven upon friend and foe: then seemed it as though a sudden blaze of music and light broke into that dark abode: each sinful form stretched wildly forth to meet them — each ear hung aching on them — each glistening eye lived on them, and every heart panted and quivered as this great Christian swept his immortal harp — amongst thieves and homicides and oppressors — in that sad house of God.

"What did you think of the sermon, Fry?"

Fry. Liked the first part, sir, where he walked into thieving. Don't like his telling 'em he loves 'em. 'Tisn't to be sup-

posed a gentleman could really love such rubbish as that. Sounds like palaver.

Hawes. Now I liked it all, though it spoiled my nap.

Fry. Well sir it is very good of you to like it, for I don't think you like the man.

Hawes. The man is all very well in his place. He ought to be bottled up in one of the dark cells all the week, and then brought up and uncorked in chapel o' Sundays. It is as good as a romance is a sermon of his.

Fry. That it is, sir. Comes next after the Newgate Calendar, don't it now? But there's one thing about all his sermons I can't get over.

Hawes. And what is that?

Fry. Preaches at 'em so.

Hawes. Why, ye fool, that is the beauty of him. How is he to hit 'em, if he doesn't hit at 'em?

Fry. Mr. Jones usen't.

Hawes. Oh, Jones! He shot his arrow up in the air, and let it fall wherever the wind chose to blow it, and then, if it came down on the wrong man's head, he'd say, never mind, my boy, accident! — pure accident! No! give me a chap that hits out straight from the shoulder. Can't you see this is worth a hundred Joneses beating about the bush and droning us all asleep.

Fry. So he is, sir. So he is. But then I think he didn't ought to be quite so personal. Fancy his requesting such a lot as ours to repent their sins and go to heaven just to oblige him. There's a inducement! I call that himper dig from the pulpit.

"What d'ye call it?" growled Hawes snappishly.

"Himper dig!" replied Fry stoutly.

In the afternoon Mr. Eden preached against cruelty.

"No crime is so thoroughly without excuse as this. Other crimes have sometimes an adequate temptation, this never. The path to other crimes is down-hil; to cruelty is up-hil. In the very act, Nature, who is on the side of some crimes, cries out within us against this monstrous sin. The blood of our victim flowing from our blows, its groans and sighs and pallor, stay

the uplifted arm and appeal to the furious heart. Wonderful they should ever appeal in vain. Cruelty is not one of our pleasant vices, and the opposite virtues are a garden of delights: 'mercy is twice blessed, it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' God has written his abhorrence of this monstrous sin in letters of fire and blood on every page of history."

Here he ransacked history, and gave them some thirty remarkable instances of human cruelty, and of its being punished in kind so strangely, and with such an exactness of retribution, that the finger of God seemed visible writing on the world — "God hates cruelty."

At the end of his examples he instanced two that happened under his own eye — a favorite custom of this preacher.

"A man was tried in London for cruelty to animals; he was acquitted by a legal flaw, though the evidence was clear against him. This man returned homewards triumphant. The train in which he sat was drawn up by the side of a station. An express-train passed on the up-line at full speed. At the moment of passing the fly-wheel of the engine broke; a large fragment was driven into the air, and fell upon the stationary train: it burst through one of the carriages, and killed a man upon the spot. That man was seated between two other men, neither of whom received the slightest injury. The man so singled out was the cruel man who had evaded man's justice, but could not escape His hand who created the beasts as well as man, and who abhors all men who are cruel to any creature he has formed.

"A man and his wife conspired to rob and murder their friend and constant guest. Determined to escape detection, they coldly prepared for the deed of blood. Long before the murder they dug a hole in the passage leading from their parlor to their dining-room, and this hole was to receive the corpse of the man with whom mean time these heartless wretches eat bread day after day and drank his health at their own board. Several times the unfortunate man walked with his host and hostess over this concealed hole, his destined tomb, before the time came to sacrifice him. At last they murdered him, and

buried him in the grave they had prepared for him. The deed done, spite of all their precaution fear fell on them and hatred, and they fled from the house where the corpse was and from each other, one to the north one to the south. Fled they ever so fast, or so far apart, justice followed to the north, justice followed to the south, and dragged the miscreants together again and flung them into one prison. They were convicted and condemned to death. There came a fatal morning to this guilty pair, when the sun rose upon them and found them full of health and strength, yet in one short hour they must be dead. They were taken into the prison chapel according to custom, and from the chapel they must pass at once to the gallows. Now it so happened that the direct path from the chapel to the gallows was blocked up by some repairs that were going on in the prison, so the condemned were obliged to make a long circuit. It was one of the largest of our old prisons, a huge, irregular building, constructed with no simplicity of design, and one set of officers did not always know at once what was going on in a distant department. Hence it befel that in a certain passage of the gaol the condemned and their attendants came suddenly upon a new-made grave! Stones had been taken up, and a grave dug in this passage: the workmen had but just completed it. The grave filled up the passage, which was narrow, and but little used. The men who accompanied the murderers paused abashed and chilled. The murderers paused, and looked at one another; no words can describe that look! Planks were put down, and they walked over their own grave to their death. Is there a sceptic who tells me this was chance? Then I tell him he is a credulous fool to believe that chance can imitate omniscience, omnipotence, and holiness, so inimitably. In this astounding fact of exact retribution I see nothing that resembles chance. I see the arm of God, and the finger of God. His arm dragged the murderers to the gallows, his finger thrust the heartless cruel miscreants across the grave that was yawning for their doomed bodies! Tremble, ye cruel, God hates ye! Men speak of a murder — and sometimes, by way of distinction, they say 'a cruel murder.' See, now, what a crime cruelty must be

since it can aggravate murder, the crime before which all other sins dwindle into nothing.

"Of minor cruelties that do not attack life itself the most horrible he thought was cruelty to women. Here the man must trample on every manly feeling, on the instinct and the traditions of sex, on the opinion of mankind, on the generosity that goes with superior strength and courage. A man who is cruel to a woman is called a brute, but if the brutes could speak they would appeal against this phrase as unjust to them. What animal but man did you ever see maltreat a female of his species? The brutes are not such beasts as bad cruel men are. Or if you ever saw such a monstrosity the animal that did it was some notorious coward, such as the deer, which I believe is now and then guilty in a trifling degree of this dirty sin, being a rank coward. But who ever saw a lion or a dog or any courageous animal let himself down to the level of a cowardly man so far as this?"

Here sprang from his lips a true and tender picture of a wife: the narrow and virtuous circle of her joys, her many sufferings, great and little — no need of being cruel to her; she must suffer so much without that. The claims to pity and uncommon consideration every woman builds up during a few years of marriage! Her inestimable value in the house! How true to the hearth she is unless her husband corrupts her or drives her to despair! How often she is good in spite of his example! How rarely she is evil but by his example! God made her weaker that man might have the honest satisfaction and superior joy of protecting and supporting her. To torture her with the strength so intrusted him for her good is to rebel against heaven's design — it is to be a monster, a coward, and a fool!

"There was one more kind of cruelty it was his duty to touch upon: harsh treatment of those unhappy persons to whom it has not pleased God to give a full measure of reason."

"This is a sacred calamity to which the intelligent and the good in all ages and places have been tender and pitiful. In some countries these unfortunates are venerated, and being

little able to guard themselves are held to be under heaven's especial protection. This is a beautiful belief and honours our fallen nature. Yet in Christian England, I grieve and blush to say, cruelty often falls on their unprotected heads. Who has not seen the village boys follow and mock these afflicted persons? Youth is cruel, because the great parent of cruelty is general ignorance and experience of the class of suffering we inflict. Men who have come to their full reason have not this excuse. What! persecute those whom God hath smitten, but whom he still loves, and will take vengeance on all who maltreat them. On such and on all of you who are cruel, shame and contempt will fall sooner or later even in this world, and at that solemn day when the cruel and their victims shall meet the Judge of the quick and the dead, he on whose mercy hangs your eternal fate will say to you, 'Have ye shown mercy?' Oh! these words will crush your souls. Madmen! know ye not that the most righteous man on earth can only be saved by God's mercy, not by his justice? Would you forfeit all hope, all chance, all possibility of that mercy, by merciless cruelty to your brothers and sisters of the race of Adam? Does the day of judgment seem to you uncertain or so distant that you dare be cruel here during the few brief days you have to prepare yourself for eternity? If you are under this delusion here I tear it from your souls. That day is at hand, at the door."

Then in a moment, by the magic of eloquence, the great day of retribution was no longer faint and distant, but upon them in all its terrors; and they who in the morning had leaned forward eagerly to catch the message of mercy now shrank and cowered from the thunder that pealed over their heads, and the lightning of awful words that showed them by flashes the earth quaking and casting forth her dead — the sea trembling and casting forth her dead — the terrible trumpet pealing from pole to pole — the books opened — the dread Judge seated — and hell yawning for the guilty.

"Well, sir, how did you like this sermon?" said Fry, respectfully.

"He won't preach many more such (imperative mood) him. I'll teach him to preach at people from the pulpit."

"Well, that is what I say, sir, but you said you liked to hear him preach at folk."

"So I do" replied Hawes angrily, "but not at me ye fool!"

This afternoon two of the prisoners rang their bells, and on the warder coming to them begged in much agitation to see the chaplain. Mr. Eden was always at the prisoners' orders, and came to both of these; one was a man of about thirty, the other a mere boy. The same evening Mr. Hawes sat down, his features working wrathfully, and despatched a note to Mr. Locock, one of the visiting justices and a particular admirer of his.

Meeting Mr. Eden in the prison, he did not return that gentleman's salute: this was his way of implying war; events were thickening; a storm was brewing. This same evening there was a tap at Mr. Eden's private door, and Evans entered the room. The man's manner was peculiar. He wore outside a dogged look, as if fighting against some inward feeling; he entered looking down most pertinaciously at the floor. "Well, Evans."

Evans approached, his eyes still glued upon the floor. He shoved a printed paper roughly into Mr. Eden's hand, and said in a tone of sulky reproach "Saw ye fret because ye could not get it, and couldn't bear to see ye fret."

"Thank you, Evans, thank you!"

"You are very welcome sir" said Evans with momentary deference and kindness. Then turning suddenly at the door in great wrath with a tendency to whimper, he roared out, "Ye'll get me turned out of my place, that's what ye'll do!" and went off apparently in tremendous dudgeon; the printed paper contained "the rules of the prison," a copy of which Mr. Eden had asked from Hawes, and been refused. Evans had watched his opportunity, got them from another warder in return for two glasses of grog outside the gaol.

Mr. Eden fell to and studied the paper carefully till bed-

time. As he read it his eye more than once flashed with satisfaction in spite of a great despondency that had now for a day or two been creeping upon him.

This depression dated from biped Carter's crucifixion or soon after. He struggled gallantly against it; it appeared in none of his public acts. But when alone his heart seemed to have turned to lead. A cold languid hopelessness most foreign to his high sanguine nature weighed him to the earth, and the Dead Sea rolled over his spirit.

Earnest Mr. Hawes hated good Mr. Eden; one comfort, by means of his influence with the justices he could get him turned out of the prison. Meantime what could he do to spite him. Begin by punishing a prisoner, that is the only thing that stings him. With these good intentions earnest Hawes turned out and looked about for a prisoner to punish; unfortunately for poor Josephs the governor's eye fell upon him as he came out of the chapel. The next minute he was put on a stiff crank, which led in due course to the pillory. When he had been in about an hour and a half, Hawes winked to Fry, and said to him under his breath, "Let the parson know."

Fry strolled into the prison: he met Mr. Eden at a cell-door. "Josephs refractory again, sir," said he, with mock civility.

Mr. Eden looked him in the face, but said nothing. He went to his own room, took a paper off the table, and came into the yard. Josephs was beginning to sham, and a bucket had just been thrown over him amidst the coarse laughter of Messrs. Fry, Hodges and Hawes. Evans who happened to be in attendance stood aloof with his eyes fixed on the ground.

As soon as he saw Mr. Eden coming Hawes gave a vindictive chuckle, "Another bucket," cried he, and taking it himself he contrived to sprinkle Mr. Eden, as well as to sluice his immediate victim.

Mr. Eden took no notice of this impertinence, but to the surprise of all there he strode between the victim and his tormentors, and said sternly, "Do you know that you are committing an illegal assault upon this prisoner?"

"No, I don't," said Hawes, with a cold sneer.

"Then I shall show you. Here are the printed rules of the prison, you have no authority over a prisoner, but what these rules give you. Now show me where they permit you to pillory a prisoner?"

"They don't forbid it, that is enough."

"No! it is not: they don't forbid you to hang him, or to sear him with a hot iron, but they tell you in this paragraph what punishments you may inflict, and that excludes all punishments of your own invention. You may neither hang him nor burn him nor famish him nor crucify him, all these acts are equally illegal. So take warning all of you here — you are all servants of the law — don't let me catch you assaulting a prisoner contrary to the law, or you shall smart to the uttermost. Evans, I command you in the name of the law release that prisoner."

Evans thus appealed to fidgetted, and turned colour, and his hands worked by his side; "Your reverence!" cried he, in an imploring tone, and stayed where he was; on this Mr. Eden made no more ado, but darted to Josephs' side, and began to unfasten him with nimble fingers.

Hawes stood dumb-foundered for a minute or two, then recovering himself he roared out —

"Officers do your duty!"

Fry and Hodges advanced upon Mr. Eden, but before they could get at him the huge body of Evans interposed itself. The man was pale but doggedly resolved.

"Mustn't lay a finger on his reverence," said he almost in a whisper but between his clenched teeth, and with the look of a bulldog over a bone.

"What do you rebel against me, Evans?"

"No, sir," said Evans softening his tone, "but nobody must affront his reverence. Look here sir, his reverence knows a great deal more than I do, and he says this is against the law. He showed you the Act, and you couldn't answer him except by violence, which ain't no answer at all. Now I am a servant of the law, and I know better than go against the law."

"There I want no more of your chat: loose the prisoner."

"Seems to me he is loosed," said Fry.

"Go to the 5lb. crank Josephs, and let me see how much you can do in half an hour."

"That I will your reverence," and off he ran.

"Now sir," said Hawes sternly, "I put up with this now because it must end next week. I have written to the visiting justices, and they will settle whether you are to be master in the gaol or I."

"Neither, Mr. Hawes. The law shall be your master and mine."

"Very good! but there's a hole in your coat for as clever as you are; every gaol has its customs as well as its rules."

"Which customs if illegal are abuses, and shall be swept out of it."

"I'll promise you one thing — the justices shall sweep you out of the gaol."

"How can you promise that?"

"Because they only see with my eyes, and hear with my ears; they would do a great deal more for me than kick out a refractory chaplain."

Mr. Eden's eye flashed, he took out his note-book.

"Present Fry, Hodges, Evans. Mr. Hawes asserts that the visiting justices see only with his eyes, and hear with his ears."

Hawes laughed insolently, but a little uneasily.

"In spite of your statement that the magistrates are unworthy of their office, I venture to hope for the credit of the county, there will not be found three magistrates to countenance your illegal cruelties. But should there be —"

"Ay; what then?"

"I shall go higher and appeal to the Home Secretary."

"Ha! ha! He won't take any notice of you."

"Then I shall appeal to the Sovereign."

"And if she takes you for a madman."

"I shall appeal to the people. Oh! Mr. Hawes, I give you my honour this great question whether or not the law can penetrate a prison shall be sifted to the bottom. Pending my appeals to the Home Office the Sovereign and the people, I have placed a thousand pounds in my solicitor's hands —"

"A thousand pounds! have you, sir. What for, if I am not too curious?"

"For this, sir. Each prisoner whom you have pilloried and starved and assaulted contrary to law shall bring an action of assault against you the moment he leaves the prison. He shall have counsel, and the turnkeys and myself shall be subpœnaed as evidence. When once we get you into court you will find that a prison is the stronghold of law, not a den of lawlessness."

He then turned sharp on the warders.

"I warn you against all your illegal practices; Mr. Hawes's orders shall neither excuse nor protect you; you owe your first obedience to the crown and the law. Here are your powers and your duties, you can all read. Here it is ruled that a prisoner shall receive four visits a day from the governor, chaplain, and two turnkeys; these four visits are to keep the man from breaking down under the separate and silent system. You have all been breaking this rule, but you shall not. I shall report you Evans, you Fry, and you Hodges, and you Mr. Hawes, to the authorities, if after this warning you leave a single prisoner unvisited and unspoken with."

"Have you done preaching, parson?"

"Not quite, gaoler."

He tapped the printed paper.

"Here is a distinct order that sick prisoners shall be taken out of their cells into the infirmary, a vast room where they have a much better chance of recovering than in these stinking cells ventilated scientifically, *i. e.*, not ventilated at all. Now there are seven prisoners dangerously ill at this moment; yet you smother these unfortunates in their solitary cells, instead of giving them the infirmary and nurses according to the law. Let these seven persons be in the infirmary before post-time this evening, or to-morrow I report you to the Secretary of State."

With these words he went off leaving them all looking at one another.

"He is coming back again," said Fry.

He did come back again with heightened color and flashing eyes.

"Here is the prisoners' diet," cried he, tapping the printed rules; "it is settled to an ounce by law, and I see no authority given to the gaoler to tamper with it under any circumstances. Yet I find you perpetually robbing prisoners of their food. Don't let me catch either gaoler or turnkeys at this again. Gaolers and turnkeys have no more right to steal a prisoner's food than to rob the till of the Bank of England. He receives it defined in bulk and quality from the law's own hand, and the wretch who will rob him of an ounce of it is a felon without a felon's excuse; and as a felon I will proceed against him by the dog-whip of the criminal law, by the gibbet of the public press, and by every weapon that wit and honesty have ever found to scourge cruelty and theft since civilization dawned upon the earth."

He was gone and left them all turned to statues. A righteous man's wrath is far more terrible than the short-lived passion of the unprincipled. It is rarer, and springs from a deeper source than temper.

Even Hawes staggered under this mortal defiance so fierce and unexpected. For a moment he regretted having pushed matters so far.

This scene let daylight in upon shallow earnest Hawes, and showed him a certain shallow error he had fallen into. Because insolence had no earthly effect on the great man's temper, he had concluded that nothing could make him boil over. A shade of fear was now added to rage hatred and a desire of vengeance.

"Fry, come to my house."

Evans had a wife and children, and these hostages to fortune weighed down his manly spirit. He came to Hawes as he was going out and said submissively, though not graciously—

"Very sorry, sir, to think I should disobey you, but when his reverence said it was against the law" —

"That is enough, my man," replied Hawes quietly; "he has bewitched you it seems. When he is kicked out you will be my servant again I dare say."

The words and the tone were not ill humoured. It was not Hawes's cue to quarrel with a turnkey.

Evans looked suddenly up, for his mind was relieved by Mr. Hawes's moderation; he looked up and saw a cold stern eye dwelling on him with a meaning that had nothing to do with the words spoken.

Small natures read one another.

Evans saw his fate inscribed in Hawes's eye.

CHAPTER XVI.

HAWES and Fry sat in council. A copy of the prison rules was before them, and the more they looked at them after Mr. Eden's interpretation, the less they liked them; they were severe, and simple; stringent against the prisoners on certain points; stringent in their favor on others.

"The sick list must go to the infirmary, I believe," said Hawes, thoughtfully. "He'd beat us there. The justices will support me on every other point, because they must contradict themselves else. I'll have that fellow out of the gaol, Fry, before a month is out, and mean time what can I do to be revenged on him?"

"Punish 'em all the more," suggested the simple-minded Fry.

"No, that won't do; better keep a little quiet now till he is out of the gaol. Fine it would look if he was really to bribe these vermin to bring actions against me, and subpœna himself and that sneaking dog Evans."

"Well, sir, but if you turn him out he will do it all the more."

"You fool, can't you see the difference. If he comes into court a servant of the crown, every lie he tells will go for gospel. But if he comes a disgraced servant cashiered for refractory conduct, why then we could tell the jury it is all his spite at being turned off."

"You know a thing or two, sir," whined the doleful Fry.

Hawes passed him a fresh tumbler of grog, and pondered

deeply and anxiously. But suddenly an idea flashed on him that extinguished his other meditations. "Give me the rules." He ran his eye rapidly over them. "Why no! of course not, what a fool I was not to see that half an hour ago."

"What is it, sir?"

"Finish your grog first, and then I have a job for you." He sat down and wrote two lines on a slip of paper.

"Have you done?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then take this order."

"Yes, sir."

"And the printed rules in your hand — here take 'em."

"Yes, sir."

"And take Hodges and Evans with you, and tell me every word that sneaking dog Evans says and everything he does."

"Yes, sir. But what are we all three to do?"

"Execute this order!"

An ebullition of wrath was as rare with Mr. Eden as an eruption of Vesuvius. His deep-rooted indignation against cruelty remained; it was a part of his nature. But his ruffled feathers smoothed themselves the moment little Hawes and Co. were out of his eye. He even said to himself "what is the matter with me? one moment so despondent, the next irascible. I hardly know myself. I must take a little of my antidote." So saying he proceeded to visit some of those cells into which he had introduced rational labor (anti-theft he called it). Here he found cheerful looks as well as busy hands. Here industry was relished with a gusto inconceivable to those who have never stagnated body and soul in enforced solitude and silence. Here for the time at least were honest converts to anti-theft. He had seen them dull and stupid, brutalised, drifting like inanimate bodies on the heavy waters of the Dead Sea. He had drawn them ashore and put life into them. He had taught their glazed eyes to sparkle with the stimulus of rational and interesting work, and those same eyes rewarded him by beaming on him with pleasure and gratitude whenever he came. This soothed

and cheered his weary spirit vexed by the wickedness and stupidity that surrounded him and obstructed the good work.

His female artisans gave him a keen pleasure, for here he benefited a sex as well as a prisoner. He had long been saying that women are as capable as men of a multitude of handicrafts, from which they are excluded by man's jealousy and grandmamma's imbecility. And this wise man hoped to raise a few Englishwomen to the industrial level of Frenchwomen and Englishmen; not by writing and prattling that the sex are at present men's equals in intelligence and energy, which is a stupid falsehood calculated to keep them for ever our inferiors by persuading them they need climb no higher than they have climbed.

His line was very different. "At present you are infinitely man's inferior in various energy," said he. "Dependents are inferiors throughout the world."

If they were not so at first starting such a relation would make them so in two months.

"Try and be more than mere dependents on men.," was his axiom. "Don't *talk* that you are his equal, and then open that eloquent mouth to be fed by his hand — do something! It is by doing fifty useful and therefore lucrative things to your one that man becomes your creditor, and a creditor will be a superior to the world's end. Out of these fifty things you might have done twenty as well as he can do them, and ten much better; and those thirty added to the domestic duties in which you do so much more than your share, would go far to balance the account and equalize the sexes."

Thus he would sometimes talk to the more intelligent of his hussies; but he did a great deal more than talk. He supplied from himself that deficiency of inventive power and enterprise which is woman's weak point; and he tilled those wide powers of masterly execution which they possess unknown to grandpapa Cant and grandmamma Precedent. As this clear head had foreseen, his women came out artisans. The eye that could thread a needle proved accurate enough for anything. Their supple taper fingers soon learned to pick up type, and

place it quite as quick as even the stiff digits of the male all one size from knuckle to nail. The same with watch-making, and other trades reputed masculine; they beat the men's heads off at learning many kinds of finger-work new to both; their singular patience stood them in good stead here; they undermined difficulties that the males tried to jump over and fell prostrate.

A great treat was in store; one of the fruit-trees he had planted in the huge fallow of — Gaol, was to be shaken this afternoon. Two or three well-disposed prisoners had been set to review their past lives candidly, and to relate them simply, with reflections. Of these Mr. Eden cut out every one which had been put in to please him, retaining such as were sober and seemed genuine to his lynx eye.

Mr. Eden knew that some men and women listen more to their fellows than their superiors — to the experiences and sentiments of those who are in their own situation, than to those who stand higher but farther away. He had found out that a bad man's life honestly told is a beacon. So he set "roguery teaching by examples."

There were three male narratives in the press, and two female. For a day or two past, the printers (all women,) had been setting up the type, and now the sheets were to be struck off.

There was no little expectation among the prisoners. They were curious to see their compeers in print, and to learn their stories, and see how they would tell them; and as for the writers, their bodies were immured, but their minds fluttered about on tip-toe round the great engine of publicity, as the author of the "Novum Organon" fluttered when he first went into print, and as the future authoress of "Lives and Careers of Infants in Arms" will flutter.

The press stood in the female-governor's room. One she-artisan, duly taught before, inked the type, and put in a blank sheet.

No. 2 pulled the bar of the press towards her, and at the moment of contact threw herself back with sudden vigour, and gave the telling knip; the types were again covered with ink,

the sheet reversed, and No. 3 (one of the writers) drew out a printed sheet — two copies of two stories complete.

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried No. 3, flushing with surprise and admiration, "how beautiful! See, your reverence, here is mine — 'Life of an Unfortunate Girl.'"

"Yes, I see it. And pray what do you mean by an unfortunate girl?"

"Oh, sir! you know."

"Unfortunate means one whom we are bound to respect as well as pity. Has that been your character?"

"No," was the mournful reply.

"Then why print a falsehood? Falsehoods lurk in adjectives as well as substantives. Misapplied terms are strongholds of self-deception. Nobody says 'I am unfortunate, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.' Such words are fortifications to keep self-knowledge and its brother repentance from the soul."

"Oh, sir! what am I to call myself?" She hid her face in her hands.

"My dear, you told me a week ago you were — a penitent."

"So I am, indeed I am. Sir, may I change it to 'a penitent girl?'"

"You would make me very happy if you could do it with truth."

"Then I can, indeed I can." And she took out 'an unfortunate,' and put in 'a penitent.'

"There," said she, glowing with exultation and satisfaction, "'Life of a Penitent Girl.'"

Oh! it was a pretty sight. Their little hearts were all in it. Their little spirits rose visibly as the work went on — such beaming eyes — such glowing cheeks, and innocent looks of sparkling triumph to their friend and father, who smiled back like Jupiter, and quizzings of each other to stimulate to greater speed.

In went the sheets, on went the press, out came the tales, up grew the pile, amidst quips and cranks and rays of silver-toned laughter, social labour's natural music. They were all

so innocent and so happy, when the door was unceremoniously opened, and in burst Fry and Hodges, followed by Evans crawling with his eyes on the ground.

The workwomen looked astonished, but did not interrupt their work. Fry came up to Mr. Eden, and gave him a slip of paper on which Hawes had written an order that all work not expressly authorised by the law should be expelled from the gaol on the instant.

Mr. Eden perused the order, and the colour rose to the roots of his hair. By way of comment Fry put the prison-rules under his eye.

"Anything about printing, or weaving, or watch-making in these rules, sir?"

Mr. Eden was silent.

"Perhaps you will cast your eye over 'em and see, sir," continued Fry slily. "Shouldn't like to offend the law again."

Mr. Eden took the paper, but not to read it — he knew it by heart. It was to hide his anguish from the enemy. Hawes had felled him with his own weapon. He put down the paper, and showed his face, which was now stern and composed.

"What we are doing is against the letter of the law, as your pillory and your starvation of prisoners are against both letter and spirit. Mr. Hawes shall find no excuse for his illegal practices in any act of mine."

He then turned to the artizans. "Girls, you must leave off."

"Leave off, sir?" cried No. 3, faintly.

"Yes, no words; obey the prison-rules; they do not allow it."

"Come my birds," shouted Hodges roughly to the women. "Stand clear, we want this gear."

"What do you want of it, Mr. Hodges?"

"Only to put it outside the prison-gate sir. That is the order."

The printing-press, representative of knowledge, enemy of darkness, stupidity, cruelty; organ of civilization — was ignominiously thrust to the door.

This feat performed, they went to attack anti-theft.

"Will you come along with us sir, to see it is all legal?" sneered Fry.

"I will come to see that insolence is not added to cruelty."

At the door of Mary Baker's cell Mr. Eden hung back as Hodges and Fry passed in. At last after a struggle he entered the cell. The turnkeys had gathered up the girl's work and tools, and were coming out with them, whilst the artisan stood desolate in the middle of the cell.

"Oh sir," cried she to Mr. Eden, "I am glad you are here. These blackguards have broke into my cell, and they are robbing it."

"Hush, Mary; what they are doing is the law, and we were acting against the law."

"Were we, sir?"

"Yes. It is a bad law, and will be changed; but till it is changed we must obey it. You are only one victim among many. Be patient, and pray for help to bear it."

"Yes, your reverence: are they all to be robbed of their tools?"

"All."

"Poor things!" said Mary Baker.

"Evans, it is beyond my strength — I am but a man; I can bear even this, but I can't bear to see it done. I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

And his reverence turned his back on the moral butchers, and crept away to his own room. There he sank into a chair, and laid his brow upon the table with his hands stretched out before him and his whole frame trembling most piteously.

Eden and Hawes are not level antagonists — one takes things to heart, the other to temper.

In this bitter hour it seemed to him impossible that he could ever counteract the pernicious Hawes.

"There is but one chance left for these poor souls. I shall try it, and it will fail. Well! let it fail. Were there a thousand more chances against me than there are I must battle to the last. Let me mature my plan;" and he fell into a sad but stern reverie.

He lay thus crushed, though not defeated, more than two hours in silence. Had Hawes seen him he would have exulted at his appearance.

"A man from the gaol to speak to you sir."

A heavy rap at the parlour door, and Evans came in sheepishly smoothing down his hair. Mr. Eden turned his head as he lay on the sofa, and motioned him to a seat.

"I couldn't sleep till I had spoken to you. I obeyed your orders, sir. We have undone your work."

"How did the poor souls bear it?"

"Some cried, some abused us, one or two showed they were better than we are."

"How?"

"They prayed heaven to forgive us and hoped we might never come to know what they felt. I wish I'd never seen the inside of a gaol. Fry got a scratched face in one cell, sir."

"I am sorry to hear that. I shall have to scold her; who was it?"

"You won't scold her; you won't have the heart."

"I will scold her whether I have the heart or not. Who was it?"

"No. 57, a gal that had some caterpillars."

"Silkworms!"

"Yes sir, silkworms, and it seems she has got to be uncommon fond of them, calls 'em her children, poor soul. When we came in and went to take them away she stood up for 'em and said we had no right — his reverence gave them her."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, of course they made short work and took them away by force. Then I saw the girl turn white and her eye getting wildish; however I don't know as it would have come to anything, but with them snatching away the leaves and the grubs one of them fell on the ground. The poor girl she goes to lift it up, and Fry he sees her and put his foot on it before she could get to it."

"Ah!"

"I dare say he did'nt stop to think you know; but I don't

envy him having done it. Well, sir, he paid for it. The girl just gave one sort of a yell — you could not call it anything else — and she went right at his head both claws going and as quick one after another as a cat. The blood squirted like a fountain — I never saw anything like it. She'd have killed him if it hadn't been for Hodges and me."

"Killed him? nonsense — a great strong fellow!"

"No nonsense at all, sir. She was stronger than he was for a moment or two, and that moment would have done his business. She meant killing. Sir," said Evans lowering his voice, "her teeth were making for his jugular when I wrenched her away, and it was like tearing soul from body to get her off him, and she snarling and her teeth gnashing for him all the time."

Mr. Eden winced.

"The wretched creature! I was putting her on the way to heaven, and in one moment they made a fiend of her. Evans, you are not the same man you were a month ago."

"No sir that I am not. When I think of what a brute I used to be to them poor creatures, I don't seem to know myself."

"What has changed you?"

"Oh you know very well."

"Do I? No; I have a guess; but —"

"Why your sermons to be sure."

"My sermons?"

"Yes, sir. Why, how could I hear them and my heart be as hard as it used? They would soften a stone."

A faint streak of surprise and simple satisfaction crossed Mr. Eden's sallow face.

"But it isn't your sermons only — it is your life, as the saying is. I was no better than Hawes and Fry, and the rest. I used to look on a prisoner as so much dirt. But when I saw a gentleman like you respect them, and say openly you loved them, I began to take a thought, and says I, Hallo! if his reverence respects them so, an ignorant brute like Jack Evans isn't to look down on them."

"Ah! confess too that half-hour in the jacket opened your eyes and so your heart."

"It did, sir; it did. I was like a good many more that misuse prisoners. I did'nt know how cruel I was."

"You are on my side, then?"

"Yes I am on your side, and I am come here mainly to speak my mind to you. Sir, it goes to my heart to see you lost and wasted in such a place as this."

"You think I do no good here?"

"No! no! sir. Why I am a proof the other way. But you would do more good anywhere else. Every body says you are a bright and a shining light, sir. Then why stay where there is dirty water thrown over you every day? Besides, it is killing you! I don't want to frighten you, sir, but if you could only see how you are changed since you came here —"

"I do feel very ill."

"Of course you do; you are ill, and you will be worse if you don't get out of this dreadful place. If you are so fond of prisons sir, you can go from here to another prison. There is more than one easy-going chaplain as would be glad to change with you."

"Do you think so?" said Mr. Eden faintly lying on his back on the sofa.

"Not a doubt of it. If it warn't for Hawes you would convert half this prison; but you see the governor is against you, and he is stronger than you. So it is no good to go wasting yourself. Now what will be the upshot? Why, you'll break your heart to begin, and lose your health; and when all is done, at a word from Hawes the justices will turn you out of the gaol — and send me after you for taking your part."

"What do you advise?"

"Why cut it."

"Cut it?"

"Turn your back on the whole ignorant lot, and save yourself for better things. Why, you will win many a battle yet your reverence, if you don't fling yourself away this time," said Evans in tones of homely cheerfulness and encouragement.

There was a deal of good sense in the rough fellow's words and a homely sympathy not intruded but rather as it were

forcing its way against the speaker's intention. All this co-operated powerfully with Mr. Eden's present inclination and feeling as he lay sick and despondent upon the couch.

"So that is really your advice?" inquired Mr. Eden feebly and regretfully.

"Yes your reverence that is my advice."

Mr. Eden rose in a moment like an elastic spring, and whirled round in front of Evans. "And this is my answer — RETRO SATANAS!" shouted he, with two eyes flashing like a pair of sabres in the sun.

"Mercy on us," roared Evans, recoiling so hastily that he rolled over a chair, "what is that?" and he sat upon the floor a long way off, with eyes like saucers, and repeated in a whisper "what is that?"

"A quotation," replied the other grimly.

"A quotation! now only think of that," said Evans much relieved. "Sounded like cussing and swearing in Latin."

"Come here my good friend and sit beside me."

Evans came gingerly.

"Well, but ye mustn't thunder at me in Latin any more."

"Well, I won't."

"It isn't fair; how can I stand up against Latin?"

"Well, come here and I'll have at you in the vulgar tongue. Aha! So you come in robust health and spirits and tempt a poor broken sick creature to mount the white feather; to show his soldierly qualities by running from the foe to some cool spot where there are no enemies, and there fighting the good fight in peace. Evans you are a good creature, but you are a poor creature. Yes, Hawes is strong, yet I will resist him. And I am weak — yet I will resist. He will get the justices on his side — yet I will resist. I am sick and dispirited — yet I will resist. The representative of humanity and Christianity in a stronghold of darkness and cruelty and wrong must never sagg with doubt nor shake with fear. I will fight with pen and hand and tongue against these outlaws, so long as there is a puff of wind in my body, and a drop of indomitable blood in my veins."

"No doubt you are game enough," mourned Evans, "I wish you wern't."

"And as for you, you came here to seduce a sick broken creature from his Master's service; you shall remain to be enlisted in it yourself instead."

Evans shuffled uneasily on his chair at these words: "I think I am on your side," said he.

"Half! but it is no use being half anything; your hour is come to choose between all right and all wrong."

"I wouldn't be long choosing if it warn't for one thing."

"And what is that one thing which can outweigh the one thing needful?"

"My wife and my four children; if I get myself turned out of this gaol how am I to find bread for that small lot?"

"And do you think shilly-shallying between two stools will secure your seat? You have gone too far with me to retract; don't you see that the gaoler means to get you dismissed the next time the justices visit the gaol for business? Can't you read your fate in the man's eye?"

Evans groaned. "I read it, I read it, but I didn't want to believe it."

"He set a trap for you half an hour after you had defended me."

"He did! I told my wife I was a gone coon, but she overpersuaded me; 'keep quiet' said she 'and 'twill blow over.' But you see it in the same light as I did, don't you sir?"

Mr. Eden smiled grimly in assent.

"You are a doomed man," said he coolly; "half measures can't save you, but whole measures may — perhaps."

"What is to be done, sir?" asked Evans helplessly.

"Your only chance is to go heart and hand with me in the project which occupies me now."

"I will sir' cried Fluctuans with a sudden burst of resolution, "for I'm druv in a corner. So please tell me what is your project?"

"To get Mr. Hawes dismissed from this gaol."

As he uttered these words the reverend gentleman had a

severe spasm which forced him to lie back and draw his breath hard. Evans uttered something between a cry of dismay and a groan of despair, and stared down upon this audacious invalid with wonder and ire at his supernatural but absurd cool courage.

"Turn our governor out of this gaol? Now hark to that; you might as well try to move a mountain; and look at you lying there scarce able to move yourself, and talking like that."

"Pour me out a cup of tea, Mr. Faintheart; I am in great pain — thank you."

He took the cup, and as he stirred it he said coolly, "Did you ever read of Marshal Saxe, Mr. Faintheart? He fought the battle of Fontenoy as he lay a dying. He had himself carried on his bed of death from one part of the field to another; at first the fight went against him, but he spurned craven counsels with his expiring heart; he saw the enemy's blunder with his dying eye, and waved his troops on to victory with his dying hand. This was one of the great feats of earth. But the soldiers of Christ are as stout-hearted as any man that ever carried a marshal's baton or a serjeant's pike. Yes! I am ill, and I feel as if I were dying, Evans; but living or dying I am the Lord's. I will fight for him to the last gasp, and I will thrust this malefactor from his high office with the last action of my hand — Will you help me, or will you not?"

"I will, sir! I will! — What on earth can I do?"

"You can turn the balanced scale and win the day!"

"Can I, sir?" cried Evans, greatly puzzled.

"You will find some wine in that cupboard, my man; fill yourself a tumbler; I will sip my tea, and explain myself. You think this Hawes is a mountain; — no! he is a large pumpkin hollow at the core. You think him strong; — no; he but seems so, because some of the many at whose mercy he is are so weak. There is a flaw in Hawes, which must break him sooner or later. He is a felon. The law hangs over his head by a single hair; he has forfeited his office, and will be turned out of it the moment we can find among his many superiors one man with one grain either of honesty or intelligence."

"But how shall we find that, sir?"

"By looking for it everywhere, till we find it somewhere. Mr. Hawes tells me in other words that the visiting justices do not possess the one grain we require. I profit by the intelligence the enemy was weak enough to give me, and I go — not to the visiting justices. To-morrow, if my case is ready, I send a memorial to the Home-Office, accuse Hawes of felonious practices, and demand an inquiry."

Evans's eye sparkled; he began to gather strength from the broken man.

"But now comes the difficulty. A man should never strike a feeble blow. My appeal will be read by half-educated clerks. If I don't advance something that the small official mind can take in, I shall never reach the heads of the office. It would be madness to begin by attacking national prejudices, by combating a notion so stupid, and therefore so deep-rooted, as that prisoners have no legal rights. No! the pivot of my assault must be something that a boy can afford to be able to comprehend for eighty pounds a year and a clerk's desk in a Government-office. Now Mr. Hawes has, for many months past furnished false reports to the justices and to the Home-Office. Here is the true stepping-stone to an inquiry, here is the fact to tell on the official mind; for the man's cruelty and felonious practices are only offences against God and the law; but a false report is an offence against the office. And here I need your help."

"You shall have it sir."

"I want to be able to prove this man's reports to be lies; I think such a proof exists," said Mr. Eden very thoughtfully; "now, if it does, you alone can get hold of it for me. One of the turnkeys notes down every punishment of a prisoner in a small pocket-book, for I have seen him."

"Yes, sir; Fry does — never misses!"

"What becomes of those notes?"

"I don't know."

"What if he keeps a book and enters everything in it?"

"But if he had, shouldn't we have caught a glimpse of it?"

"Humph! A man does not make notes constantly, and destroy them; Fry too is an enthusiast in his way; I am sure he keeps a record, and if he does it is a true one, for he has no object in tampering with his own facts. Bring me such a book or any record kept by Fry; let me have it for twelve hours and Hawes shall be turned out of the gaol and you stay in it."

"Sir!" cried Evans, in great excitement, "if there is such a thing you shall see it to-morrow morning."

"No! to-night! come, you have an hour before you. Do you want the sinews of war? here, take this five pounds with you; you may have to buy a sight of it; but if you ask him whether I am right in telling you it is not the custom of gaols to crucify prisoners in the present century, perhaps the barbarian will produce his record of abuses to prove to you that it is. Work how you please; but be wary — be intelligent, and bring me Fry's ledger — or never look me in the face again."

He waved his hand, and Evans strode out of the room animated with a spirit not his own. He who had animated him lay back on the sofa prostrated. Half an hour elapsed, no Evans; a quarter of an hour more, still no Evans; but just before the hour struck, in he burst out of breath but red with triumph.

"Your reverence is a witch — you can see in the dark — look here, sir!" and he flung a dirty ledger on the table. "Here's all the money, sir. He did not get a farthing of it. I flattered the creature's pride, and he dropped the cheese into my hand like the old carrion crow when they asked him for one of his charming songs. But he had no notion it was going out of the gaol; so you'll bring it in and give it me back the first thing to-morrow, sir. I must run back, time's up! — Good night, your reverence. Am I on your side, or whose?"

"Good night, my fine fellow; you shan't be turned out of the gaol now. Good night."

He wanted him gone. He went to a drawer and took out his own book, a copy of Hawes's public log-book, which he had made as soon as he came into the gaol, with the simple view of guiding himself by the respectable precedents he innocently ex-

pected to find there. He lighted candles, placed his sheets by the side of Fry's well-thumbed ledger, and plunged into a comparison.

It was as he expected. On one side lay the bare, simple brutal truth in Fry's hand, on the other the same set of facts colored, moulded, and cooked in every imaginable way to bear inspection, with occasional suppressions where the deed and consequences were too frightful to bear coloring, moulding, extenuating, or cooking.

The book was a thick quarto, containing a strict record of the prison for four years; two years of Captain O'Connor, and two of Hawes, the worthy who had supplanted him.

Mr. Eden was a rapid penman; het set to, and by half-past eleven o'clock he had copied the first part; for under O'Connor there were comparatively few punishments. Then he attacked Hawes's reign. Sheet after sheet was filled and numbered. He threw them on another table, as each was filled. Three o'clock; still he wrote with all his might. Four o'clock; black spots danced before his eyes, and his fingers ached, and his brow burned, and his feet were ice. Still the light indefatigable pen gallopped along the paper. Meantime the writer's feelings were of the most mixed and extraordinary character. Often his eye flashed with triumph, as Fry exposed the dishonesty and utter mendacity of Hawes. Oftener still it dilated with horror at the frightful nature of these very revelations. At six o'clock Fry's record was all copied out.

Mr. Eden shaved and took his bath, and ran into the town. He knocked up a solicitor, with whom he was acquainted.

"I want you to make my will, while your son attests this copy of this ledger."

"But my son is in bed."

"Well! he can read in bed. Which is his room?"

"That one." — Rap! (Come in.)

"Here, Mr. Edward, compare these two, and correct or attest this as a true copy — Twenty minutes' work — Two guineas; here they are on your drawers;" and he chucked the documents on the bed, opened the shutters, and drew the bed-

curtains; and passing his arm under the father's, he drew him into his own office; opened the shutters, put paper before him, and dictated a will. Three bequests, (one to Evans,) and his mother residuary legatee. The will written, he ran up stairs, made father and son execute it, and then darted out, caught a fly that was going to the railway, engaged it; up stairs again The work was done, copy attested.

"Half-a-crown if you are at the gaol in five minutes."

Gallopped off with his two documents — entered the gaol — went to his own room — sent for Evans — gave him Fry's book, and ordered himself the same breakfast the prisoners had.

"I am bilious, and no wonder. I have been living too luxuriously; if I had been content with the diet my poor brothers live on, I should be in better health; it serves me just right."

Then he sat down and wrote a short memorial to the Secretary for the Home Department, claiming an inquiry into the gaoler's conduct.

"I have evidence on the spot to show that for two years he has been guilty of illegal practices. That he has introduced into the prison an unlawful instrument of torture. That during his whole period of office he has fabricated partial, colored, and false reports of his actions in the prison, and also of their consequences; that he has suppressed all mention of no less than seven attempts at suicide, and has given a false color, both with respect to the place of death, the manner of death, and the causes of death of some twenty prisoners besides. That his day-book, kept in the prison for the inspection and guide of the magistrates, is a tissue of frauds, equivocations, exaggerations, diminutions, and direct falsehoods; that his periodical reports to the Home Office are a tissue of the same frauds, suppressions, inventions, and direct falsehoods.

"The truth therefore is inaccessible to you, except by a severe inquiry conducted on the spot. That inquiry I pray for on public grounds, and if need be, demand in my own person, as Her Majesty's servant driven to this strait —

"I am responsible to Her Majesty for the lives and well-

being of the prisoners, and yet unable, without your intervention, to protect them against illegal violence covered by organized fraud."

Mr. Eden copied this, and sent the copy at once to Mr. Hawes with two lines to this effect, that the duplicate should not leave the town till seven in the evening, so Mr. Hawes had plenty of time to write to the Home Secretary by same post, and parry or meet this blow if he thought it worth his while.

It now remained only to post the duplicate for the Home Office. Mr. Eden directed it and waxed it, but even as he leaned over it sealing it, the room became suddenly dark to him, and his head seemed to weigh a ton. With an instinct of self preservation he made for the sofa, which was close behind him, but before he could reach it his senses had left him, and he fell with his head and shoulders upon the couch, but his feet on the floor, the memorial tight in his hand. He paid the penalty of being a blood horse — he ran till he dropped.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Two ladies to see you," grunted the red-haired servant, throwing open the door without ceremony; and she actually bounced out again without seeing anything more than that her master was lying on the sofa.

Susan Merton and her aunt came rapidly and cheerfully into the room.

"Here we are, Mr. Eden, aunt Davies and I — Oh!" The table being between the sofa and the door, the poor gentleman's actual condition was not self-evident from the latter, but Susan was now in the middle of the room and her gaiety gave way in a moment to terror.

"Why the man has fainted!" cried Mrs. Davies hurriedly. Susan clasped her hands together, and turned very pale; but for all that she was the first at Mr. Eden's head; "he is choking! he is choking! help me, aunt, help me!" but even while crying for help her nimble fingers had untied and flung away Mr.

Eden's white neck-tie, which being high and stiff was doing him a very ill turn, as the air forcing itself violently through his nostrils plainly showed.

"Take his legs, aunt; oh! oh! oh!"

"Don't be a fool girl, it is only a faint."

Susan flew to the window and threw it open, then flew back and seized one end of the couch. Her aunt comprehended at a glance, and the two carried it with its burden to the window.

"Open the door, aunt," cried Susan, as she whipped out her scent-bottle, and with her finger wetted the inside of his nostrils with the spirit as the patient lay in the thorough draught. Susan sobbed with sorrow and fear, but her emotion was far from disabling her.

She poured some of her scent into a water-glass, and diluted it largely. She made her aunt take a hand-screen from the mantle-piece. She plunged her hand into the liquid and flung the drops sharply into Mr. Eden's face; and Mrs. Davies fanned him rapidly at the same time.

These remedies had a speedy effect: first the film cleared from the patient's bright eye, then a little colour diffused itself gradually over his cheek, and last his lips lost their livid tint. As soon as she saw him coming to, Susan composed herself; and Mr. Eden, on his return to consciousness, looked up and saw a beautiful young woman looking down on him with a cheerful encouraging smile and wet cheeks.

"Ah!" sighed he, and put out his hand faintly to welcome Susan, "but what — how do I come here?"

"You have been a little faint," said Susan smiling, "but you are better now, you know!"

"Yes, thank you! how good of you to come! Who is this lady?"

"My aunt, sir — a very notable woman. See she is setting your things to rights already. Aunt, I wonder at you!"

She then dipped the corner of her handkerchief in scent, and slightly coloring now that her patient was conscious, she made the spirit enter his nostrils.

He gave a sigh of languid pleasure — "That is so invigo-

rating." Then he looked upward — "See how good God is to me! in my sore need he has sent me help. Oh! how pleasant is the face of a friend. By the way I took you for an angel at first," added he naïvely.

"But you have come to your senses now, sir! ha! ha! ha!" cried busy, merry Mrs. Davies, hard at work. For as soon as the patient began visibly to return to life, she had turned her back on him and fallen on the furniture.

"I hope you are come to stay with me."

As Susan was about to answer in the negative, Mrs. Davies made signals for a private conference; and after some whispering, Susan replied, "that her aunt wanted to put the house in apple-pie order, and that she, Susan, felt too anxious about him to go until he should be quite recovered."

"In that case, ladies," said he, "I consecrate to you my entire second floor, three rooms," and he rang the bell and said to the servant; "take your orders from these ladies and show them the second floor."

While his visitors were examining their apartments, Mr. Eden sought a little rest, and had no sooner dropped upon his bed, than sleep came to his relief.

He slept for nearly four hours; at first soundly, then dosing and dreaming. While he slept a prisoner sent for him but Susan would not have him awakened for that.

By-and-by Susan went into the town leaving her aunt sole guardian.

"Now aunt" said she, "don't let him be disturbed whoever comes for him. It is as much as his life is worth?"

"Well then I won't! there."

Susan had not been long gone when a turnkey called, and was shown into the parlour where Mrs. Davies was very busy. He looked about him and told her he had called for a book Mr. Eden promised him.

"Mr. Eden is asleep."

"Asleep this time of day?" said the man incredulously.

"Yes, asleep," answered Mrs. Davies, sharply; "is he never to have any sleep?"

"Well, perhaps you will tell him Mr. Fry has come for the book as requested."

"Couldn't think of disturbing him for that, Mr. Fry," replied Mrs. Davies, not intermitting her work for a single moment.

"Very well, ma'am!" said Mr. Fry, in dudgeon. "I never was here before, and I shan't ever come again — that is all—" and off he went.

Mrs. Davies showed her dismay at this threat by dusting on without once taking her eye or her mind off her job.

It was eight o'clock. Mr. Eden woke and found it almost dark.

He rose immediately; "why I have slept the day away," thought he in dismay; "and my memorial to the Home Office; it is past post time, and I have not sent it." He came hastily down stairs and entered the parlor; he found it in a frightful state. All the chairs were in the middle of the room; every part of which was choked up except a pathway three feet broad that ran by the side of the wall all round it. From this path all access into the interior was blocked by the furniture which now stood upon an area frightfully diminished by this loss of three feet taken from each wall. Mrs. Davies was a character — a notable woman. Mr. Eden's heart sank at the sight.

To find himself put to rights gives a bachelor an innocent pleasure, but the preliminary process of being put entirely to wrongs crushes his soul. "Another fanatic let loose on me," thought he, "and my room is like a road that is just mended as they call it." He peered about here and there through a grove of chairs whose legs were kicking in the air as they sat bosom downwards upon their brethren, but he could see no memorial. He rang the bell and inquired of the servant whether she had seen it. While he was describing it to her, Mrs. Davies broke in.

"I saw it — I picked it up off the floor — it was lying between the sofa and the table."

"And what did you do with it?"

"Why dusted it to be sure."

"But where did you put it?"

"On the table I suppose."

Another search and no memorial.

"Somebody has taken it."

"But who? has anybody been in this room since?"

"Plenty. You don't get much peace here I should say; but Susan gave the order you were not to be disturbed."

"This won't do," thought Mr. Eden.

"Who has been here?" said he to the servant.

"Mr. Fry is the only one that came into this room."

"Mr. Fry!" said Mr. Eden, with some surprise.

"Ay! ay!" cried Mrs. Davies. "I remember now there was an ill-looking fellow of that name here talking to me pretending you had promised him a book."

"But I did promise him a book."

"Oh, you did; did you! well he looked like a thief, perhaps he has — goodness gracious me I hope there was no money in it," and Mrs. Davies lost her ruddy colour in a moment.

"No! no! it was only a letter, but of great importance."

Another violent search at the risk of shins and hands.

"That Fry has taken it. I never saw such a hangdog looking fellow."

Mr. Eden was much vexed; but he had a trick of blaming himself, heaven only knows where he caught it. "My own forgetfulness; even if the paper had not been lost I had allowed post-time to go by — and Mr. Hawes will anticipate me with the Home Secretary." He sighed.

In so severe a struggle he was almost as reluctant to give an unfair advantage as to take one.

He ordered a fire in his little back parlour; and with a sigh sat down to rewrite his memorial and to try and recover if he could the exact words, and save the next post that left in the morning.

As Mr. Eden sat trying to recover the words of his memorial, Hawes was seated in Mr. Williams' study at Ashtown Park, concerting with that worthy magistrate the best way of turning the new chaplain out of —— gaol. He found no difficulty. Mr.

Williams had two very strong prejudices, one in favour of Hawes personally, the other in favor of the system pursued this two years in that gaol. Egotism was here too, and rendered these prejudices almost impregnable. Williams had turned out O'Connor and his milder system, and put in Hawes and his more rigorous one. Hawes was "my man — his system mine."

He told his story, and Williams burned to avenge his injured friend, whose patron and director he called himself, and whose tool he was.

"Nothing can be done until the 25th, when Palmer returns. We must be all there for an act of this importance. Do your duty as you always have, carry out the discipline, and send for me if he gives you any great annoyance in the meantime."

That zealous servant of Her Majesty, earnest Mr. Hawes, had never taken a day's holiday before. No man could accuse him of indolence, carelessness, or faint discharge of the task he had appointed himself. He perverted his duties too much to neglect them. He had been reluctant to leave the prison on a personal affair. The drive however was pleasant, and he returned freshened and animated by assurances of support from the magistrate.

As he strode across the prison yard to inspect everything before going to his house, he felt invulnerable and sneered at himself for the momentary uneasiness he had let a crack-brained parson give him. He went home; there was a nice fire, a clean-swept hearth, a glittering brass kettle on the hob for making toddy, and three different kinds of spirits in huge cruets. For system reigned in the house as well as the gaol, with this difference, that the house system was devoted to making self comfortable — the gaol system to making others wretched.

He rang the bell. In came the servant with slippers and candles unlighted, for he was wont to sip his grog by fire-light. He put on his slippers. Then he mixed his grog. Then he noticed a paper on the table, and putting it to the fire he found it was sealed. So he lighted the candles and placed them a little behind him. Then he stirred his grog and sipped it, and placing it close beside him leaned back with a grunt of satisfac-

tion, opened the paper, read it first slowly, then all in a flutter, started up as if he was going to act upon some impulse, but the next moment sat down again and stared wildly a picture of stupid consternation.

Meantime as Mr. Eden with a heavy heart was writing himself out — nauseous task —- Susan stood before him with a colour like a rose. She was in a brown cloak, from under which she took out a basket brimful of little packages, some in blue, some in white paper.

"These are grits" said she, "and these are arrowroot."

"I know — one of the phases of the potato."

"Oh for shame Mr. Eden. Well I never! And I posted your letter, sir."

"What letter? what letter?"

"The long one. I found it on the table."

"You don't mean you posted that letter?"

"Why, it was to go wasn't it?"

"Yes it was to go, but it was wonderfully intelligent of you."

"La! Mr. Eden, don't talk so; you make me ashamed. Why there was 'immediate' written on it in your own hand. Was I to wake you up to ask whether that meant it was to stay here immediate or go to London immediate?" Then she pondered a moment. "He thinks I am a fool" said she in quiet explanation without a shade of surprise or anger.

"Well! Susan, my dear friend, you don't know what a service you have done me."

Susan glittered with pleasure.

"There!" cried he, "you have spared me this most unpleasant task;" and he flung his unfinished papers into a basket. Mr. Eden congratulated himself in his way, *i. e.*, thanked heaven Susan had come there; the next thing was, he had a twinge of conscience. "I half suspected Fry of taking it in the interest of Hawes his friend. Poor Fry, who is a brute, but as honest a man as myself every bit. He shall have his book at all events. I'll put his name on it that I mayn't forget it again." Mr. Eden took the book from its shelf, wrapped it

in paper, and wrote on the cover, "For Mr. Fry from F. Eden." As the incidents of the day are ended I may as well relate what this book was, and how Fry came to ask for it.

The book was "Uncle Tom," a story which discusses the largest human topic that ever can arise; for the human race is bisected into black and white. Now-a-days a huge subject greatly treated receives justice from the public, and "Uncle Tom" is written in many places with art, in all with red ink and with the biceps muscle.

Great by theme, and great by skill, and greater by a writer's soul honestly flung into its pages, "Uncle Tom," to the surprise of many that twaddle traditional phrases in reviews and magazines about the art of fiction, and to the surprise of no man who knows anything about the art of fiction, was all the rage. Not to have read it was like not to have read "The Times" for a week.

Once or twice during the crucifixion of a prisoner, Mr. Eden had said bitterly to Fry, "Have you read 'Uncle Tom?'"

"No!" would Fry grunt.

But one day that the question was put to him, he asked with some appearance of interest "Who is Uncle Tom?"

Then Mr. Eden began to reflect. "Who knows? The cases are in a great measure parallel. Prisoners are a tabooed class in England, as are blacks in some few of the United States. The lady writes better than I can talk. If she once seizes his sympathies by the wonderful power of fiction, she will touch his conscience through his heart. This disciple of Legree is fortified against me: Mrs. Stowe may take him off his guard." He said slily to Fry, "Not know Uncle Tom! Why it is a most interesting story — a charming story. There are things in it too, that meet your case."

"Indeed, sir."

"It is a book you will like. Shall I lend it you?"

"If you please sir. Nights are drawing in now."

"I will then."

And he would; but that frightful malady jaundice, amongst

its other feats, impairs the patient's memory: and he forgot all about it. So Fry whose curiosity was at last excited came for the book. The rest we know.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Hawes went about the prison next day morose and melancholy. He spoke to no one, and snapped those who spoke to him. He punished no prisoner all day, but he looked at them as a wolf at fortified sheep. He did not know what to do to avert the blow he had drawn so perseveringly on his own head. At one time he thought of writing to the Home Office and aspersing his accuser; then he regretted his visit to Ashtown Park. "What an unlucky dog I am! I go to see a man that I was sure of before I went, and while I am gone the — parson steals a march on me. He will beat me! If I hadn't been a fool I should have seen what a dangerous devil he is. No putting him out of temper! — and no putting him out of heart! He will beat me! The zealous services of so many years won't save me with an ungrateful Government. I shall lose my stipend!"

For a while even stout-hearted earnest Mr. Hawes was depressed with gloom and bitter foreboding; but he had a resource in trouble good Mr. Eden in similar case had not.

In the despondency of his soul he turned — to GROG.

Under the inspiration of that deity he prepared for a dogged defence. He would punish no more prisoners let them do what they might, and then if an inquiry should take place he would be in case to show that by his past severities he had at last brought his patients to such perfection that weeks had elapsed without a single punishment. With this and the justices' good word he would weather the storm yet.

Thus passed three days without one of those assaults on prisoners he called punishment; but this enforced forbearance made him hate his victims. He swore at them, he threatened them all round, and with deep malice he gave open orders to punish which he secretly countermanded, so that in fact he did punish, for blows suspended over the head fall upon the soul.

Thus he made his prisoners share his gloom. He was unhappy; he was dull; robbed of an excitement which had become butter to his daily bread.

All prison life is dull. Chaplain, turnkeys, gaolers, all who live in prisons are prisoners. Barren of mental resources, too stupid to see far less read the vast romance that lay all round him, every cell a volume; too mindless to comprehend his own grand situation on a salient of the State and of human nature, and to discern the sacred and endless pleasures to be gathered there, this unhappy dolt, flung into a lofty situation by shallow blockheads, who like himself saw in a gaol nothing greater nor more than a "place of punishment," must still like his prisoners and the rest of us have some excitement to keep him from going dead. What more natural than that such a nature should find its excitement in tormenting, and that by degrees this excitement should become first a habit then a need? Growth is the nature of habit, not of one sort or another but of all — even of an unnatural habit. Gin grows on a man — charity grows on a man — tobacco grows on a man — blood grows on a man.

At a period of the reign of terror the Parisians got to find a day weary without the guillotine. If by some immense fortuity there came a day when they were not sprinkled with innocent blood the poor souls s'ennuyaient. This was not so much thirst for any particular liquid as the habit of excitement. Some months before, dancing, theatres, boulevard etc. would have made shift to amuse these same hearts, as they did some months after when the red habit was worn out. Torture had grown upon stupid earnest Hawes; it seasoned that white of egg a mindless existence.

Oh! how dull he felt these three deplorable days barren of groans, and white faces, and livid lips, and fellow-creatures shamming,* and the bucket.

Mr. Hawes had given a sulky order that the infirmary should be prepared for the sick, and now on the afternoon of the third day the surgeon had met him there by appointment.

* A generic term for swooning, or sickening, or going mad, in a prison.

"Will they get well any quicker here?" asked Hawes ironically.

"Why certainly" replied the other.

Hawes gave a dissatisfied grunt.

"I hate moving prisoners out of the cells; but I suppose I shall get you into trouble if I don't."

"Indeed!" said the other with an inquiring air; "how?"

"Parson threatens you very hard for letting the sick ones lie in their cells" said Hawes slily. "But never mind old boy — I shall stand your friend and the justices mine. We shall beat him yet" said Hawes assuming a firmness he did not feel lest this man should fall away from him and perhaps bear witness against him.

"I think you have beat him already" replied the other calmly.

"What do you mean?"

"I have just come from Mr. Eden. He sent for me."

"What, isn't he well?"

"No."

"I wish he'd die! But there is no chance of that."

"Well, there is always a chance of a man dying who has got a bilious fever."

"Why you don't mean he is seriously ill?" cried Hawes in excitement.

"I don't say that, but he has got a sharp attack."

Mr. Hawes examined the speaker's face. It was as legible as a book from the outside. He went from the subject to one or two indifferent matters, but he could not keep long from what was uppermost.

"Sawyer" said he "you and I have always been good friends."

"Yes Mr. Hawes."

"I have never been hard upon you. You ought to be here every day, but the pay is small and I have never insisted on it, because I said he can't afford to leave patients that pay."

"No, Mr. Hawes, and I am much obliged to you."

"Are you? Then tell me — between ourselves now — how ill is he?"

"He has got bilious fever consequent upon jaundice."
Hawes lowered his voice. "Is he in danger?"
"In danger? Why no, not at present."
"Oh! then it is only an indisposition after all."
"It is a great deal more than that — it is fever and bile."
"Can't you tell me in two words how ill he is?"
"Not till I see how the case turns."
"When will you be able to say then?"
"When the disorder declares itself more fully."

Hawes exploded in an oath. "You humbugs of doctors could'nt speak plain to save yourselves from hanging."

There was some truth in this ill-natured excuse. After fifteen years given to the science of obscurity Mr. Sawyer literally could not speak plain all in one moment.

The next morning there was no service in the chapel, the chaplain was in bed. This spoke for itself, and Hawes wore a grim satisfaction at the announcement.

But this was not all. In the afternoon came a letter from Mr. Williams with a large enclosure signed by her Majesty's secretary's secretary, and written by her secretary's secretary's secretary.

Its precise contents will be related elsewhere. Its tendency may be gathered from this.

Hawes had no sooner read it, than exultation painted itself on his countenance.

"Close the infirmary, and bring me the key. And you Fry put these numbers on the cranks to-morrow." He scribbled with his pencil, and gave him a long list of the proscribed.

No Mr. Eden shone now upon Robinson's solitude. He waited, and waited, and hoped till the day ended, but no! The next day the same thing. He longed for Mr. Eden's hour to come; it came, but not with it came his one bit of sunshine, his excitement, his amusement, his consolation, his friend, his brother, his all. And so one heavy day succeeded another, and Robinson became fretful, and very very sad. One day as he sat disconsolate and foreboding in his cell, he heard a stranger's voice talking to Fry outside: and what was more

strange, Fry appeared to be inviting this person to inspect the cells. The next moment his door was opened, and a figure peeped timidly into the cell from behind Fry, whose arm she clutched in some anxiety. Robinson looked up, it was Susan Merton. She did not instantly know him in his prison dress and his curly hair cut short; he hung his head, and this action and the recognition it implied made her recognize him. "Oh!" cried she, "it is Mr. Robinson!"

The thief turned his face to the wall. Even he was ashamed before one who had known him as Mr. Robinson; but the next moment he got up and said earnestly,

"Pray Miss Merton do me a favour — you had always a kind heart. Ask that man what has become of Mr. Eden — he will answer you."

"Mr. Robinson" cried Susan "I have no need to ask Mr. Fry. I am staying at Mr. Eden's house. He is very ill Mr. Robinson."

"Ah! I feared as much! he never would have deserted me else. What is the trouble?"

"You may well say trouble? it is the prison that has fretted him to death" cried Susan half bitterly half sorrowfully.

"But he will get well! it is not serious?" inquired Robinson anxiously.

Fry pricked his ears.

"He is very ill Mr. Robinson," and Susan sighed heavily.

"I'll pray for him. He has taught me to pray — all the poor fellows will pray for him that know how. Miss Merton, good for nothing as I am, I would die for Mr. Eden this minute if I could save his life by it."

Susan thought of this speech afterwards. Now she but said, "I will tell him what you say."

"And won't you bring me one word back from his dear mouth?"

"Yes! I will! good-bye, Mr. Robinson."

Robinson tried to say good-bye, but it stuck in his throat. Susan retired, and his cell seemed darker than ever.

Mr. Eden lay stricken with fever. He had been what most

of us would have called ill long before this. The day of Carter's crucifixion was a fatal day to him. On that day for the first time he saw a crucifixion without being sick after it. The poor soul congratulated himself so on this: but there is reason to think that same sickness acted as a safety valve to his nature; when it ceased the bile overflowed and mixed with his blood, producing that horrible complaint jaundice. Even then if the causes of grief and wrong had ceased he might perhaps have had no dangerous attack: but everything was against him; constant grief, constant worry, and constant preternatural exertions to sustain others while drooping himself. Even those violent efforts of will by which he thrust back for a time the approaches of his malady told heavily upon him at last. The thorough-bred horse ran much longer than a cock-tail would, but he could not run for ever.

He lay unshaven, hollow-eyed, and sallow. Mrs. Davies and Susan watched him by turns, except when he compelled them to go and take a little rest or amusement. The poor thing's thoughts were never on himself, even when he was light-headed, and this was often, though not for long together. It was generally his poor prisoners, and what he was going to do for them.

This is how Susan Merton came to visit Robinson: One day seeing his great interest in all that concerned the prison, and remembering there was a book addressed to one of the officers, Susan, who longed to do something however small to please him, determined to take this book to its destination. Leaving Mrs. Davies with a strict injunction not to stir from Mr. Eden's room till she came back, she went to the prison and knocked timidly at the great door. It was opened instantly, and as Susan fancied, fiercely, by a burly figure. Susan, suppressing an inclination to run away, asked tremulously —

"Does Mr. Fry live here?"

"Yes."

"Can I speak to him?"

"Yes. Come in, Miss."

Susan stepped in.

The man slammed the door.

Susan wished herself on its other side.

"My name is Fry: what is your pleasure with me?"

"Mr. Fry I am so glad I have found you. I am come here from a friend of yours."

"From a friend of mine??!!" said Fry with a mystified air.

"Yes; from Mr. Eden. Here is the book Mr. Fry; poor Mr. Eden could not bring it you himself, but you see he has written your name on the cover with his own hand."

Fry took the book from Susan's hand, and in so doing observed that she was lovely; so to make her a return for bringing him "Uncle Tom" and for being so pretty, Fry for once in his life felt generous, and repaid her by volunteering to show her the prison — indulgent Fry!

To his surprise Susan did not jump at this remuneration. On the contrary, she said hastily —

"Oh! no! no! no!"

Then, seeing by his face that her new acquaintance thought her a madwoman, she added —

"That is yes! I think I should like to see it a little — a very little — but if I do you must keep close by me, Mr. Fry."

"Why of course I shall keep with you," replied Fry somewhat contemptuously. "No strangers admitted except in company of an officer."

Susan still hung fire a little.

"But you mustn't go to show me the very wicked ones."

"Why they are all pretty much of a muchness for that."

"I mean the murderers — I couldn't bear such a sight."

"Got none," said Fry sorrowfully; "parted with the last of that sort four months ago — up at eight down at nine — you understand, Miss."

Happily Susan did not understand this brutal allusion; and, not to show her ignorance, she said nothing, but passed to a second stipulation —

"And Mr. Fry I know the men that set fire to Farmer Dean's ricks are in this gaol; I won't see them; they would give me

such a turn, for that seems to me the next crime after murder to destroy the crops after the very weather has spared them."

Fry smiled superior; then he said sarcastically —

"Don't you be frightened, some of our lot are beauties; your friend the parson is as fond of some of 'em as a cow is of her calf."

"Oh! then show me those ones."

Fry took her to one or two cells. Whenever he opened a cell door she always clutched him on both ribs, and this tickled Fry, so did her simplicity.

At last he came to Robinson's cell.

"In here there is a sulky chap."

"Oh! then let us go on to the next."

"But this is one his reverence is uncommon fond of," said Fry with a sneer and a chuckle; so he flung open the door, and if the man had not hung his head Susan would hardly have recognized in his uniform corduroy and close cropped hair the vulgar Adonis who had sat glittering opposite her at table the last time they met.

After the interview which I have described, Susan gratified Fry by praising the beautiful cleanliness of the prison, and returned, leaving a pleasant impression even on this rough hide and "Uncle Tom" behind her.

When she got home she found her patient calm but languid.

While she was relating her encounter with Robinson, and her previous acquaintance with him, the knock of a born fool at a sick man's door made them all start. It was Rutila with a long letter bearing an ample seal.

Mr. Eden took it with brightening eye, read it, and ground it almost convulsively in his hand. "Asses!" cried he; but the next moment he groaned and bowed his head. Her Majesty's secretary's secretary's secretary had written to tell him that his appeal for an inquiry had travelled out of the regular course: it ought to have been made in the first instance to the visiting justices, whose business it was to conduct such inquiries, and that it lay with these visiting justices to apply to the Home

Office for an extraordinary inquiry if they found they could not deal with the facts in the usual way. The office therefore had sent copies of his memorial to each of the visiting justices, who at their next inspection of the gaol would examine into the alleged facts, and had been requested to insert the results in their periodical report.

Mr. Eden sat up in bed his eye glittering: "Bring me my writing-desk."

It was put on the bed before him, but with many kind injunctions not to worry himself. He promised faithfully. He wrote to the Home Office in this style:

"A question of life and death cannot be played with as you have inconsiderately proposed; nor can a higher jurisdiction transfer an appeal to a lower one without the appellant's consent. Such a course is still more out of order when the higher judge is a salaried servant of the State and the lower ones are amateurs. This was so self-evident that I did not step out of the direct line to cast reflections upon unpaid servants. You have not seen what is self-evident — you drive me therefore to explanations.

"I offered you evidence that this gaoler is a felon, who has hoodwinked the visiting justices and has deceived you. But between you and the justices is this essential difference: they have been hoodwinked in spite of their own eyes, their own ears, and contact with that mass of living and dying evidence the prisoners. You have been deceived without a single opportunity of learning the truth.

"Therefore I appealed, and do appeal, not to convicted incompetency, but to those whose incompetency remains to be proved. Perhaps you will understand me better if I put it thus: I still accuse the gaoler of more than a hundred felonious assaults upon prisoners, of attacks upon their lives by physical torture, by hunger, thirst, preposterous confinement in dark dungeons, and other illegal practices; and I now advance another step and accuse the visiting justices of gross dereliction of their duty, of neglecting to ascertain the real practice of the gaoler in some points, and in others of encouraging, aiding, and

abetting him in open violations of the prison rules printed and issued by Act of Parliament. Of these rules, which are the gaol code, I send you a copy. I note the practices of the gaol by the side of the rules of the gaol: by comparing the two you may calculate the amount of lawless cruelty perpetrated here in each single day; then ask yourself whether an honest man who is on the spot can wait four or five months, till justice, crippled by routine, comes hobbling instead of sweeping to their relief.

"For heaven's sake bring to bear upon a matter vital to the State one half the intelligence, zeal, and sense of responsibility you will throw this evening into some ambiguous question of fleeting policy or speculative finance. Here are one hundred and eighty souls to whose correction, cure, and protection the State is pledged. No one of all these lives is safe a single day. In six weeks I have saved two lives that were gone but for me. I am now sick and enfeebled by the exertions I have had to make to save lives, and am in no condition to arrest the progress of destruction. I tell you that more lives will fall if you do not come to my aid at once! and for every head that falls from this hour I hold you responsible to God and the State.

"If I fail to prove my several accusations, as a matter of course I shall be dismissed from my office deservedly; and this personal risk entitles me not only to petition for, but to demand an inquiry into the practice of — Gaol. And in the Queen's name, whose salaried servant I am, I do demand it on the instant and on the spot."

Thus did flesh and blood address gutta-percha.

The excitement of writing this letter did the patient no good. A reaction came, and that night his kind nurses were seriously alarmed about him. They sent for the surgeon, who felt his pulse and his skin and looked grave. However he told them there was no immediate danger, and wrote a fresh prescription.

The patient would eat nothing but bread and water and gruel; but he took all the doctor's medicines, which were raking ones; only at each visit and prescription he cross-examined him

as to what effect he hoped to produce by his prescription, and compared the man's expectations with the result.

This process soon brought him to the suspicion that in his case Æsculapius's science was guess-work. But we go on hoping and hoping something from traditional remedies, even when they fail and fail and fail before our eyes.

He was often light-headed, and vented schemes of charity and benevolence ludricous by their unearthly grandeur. One day he was more than light-headed — he was delirious, and frightened his kind nurses; and to this delirium succeeded great feebleness, and this day for the first time Susan made up her mind that it was Heaven's will earth should lose this man, of whom in truth earth was scarce worthy. She came to his side and said tenderly "Let me do something for you. Shall I read to you, or sing you a hymn." Her voice had often soothed and done him good. "Tell me what can I do for you!"

The man smiled gratefully, then looked imploringly in her eyes, and said, "Dear Susan go for me into the prison and pay Strutt and Robinson each a visit. Strutt the longest, he is the oldest. Poor things! they miss me sadly."

Susan made no foolish objection. She did what she was asked, and came back and told him all they had said and all she had said; and how kind everybody was to her in the prison; and how they had all asked how he was to-day.

"They are very good," said he feebly.

Soon after he dosed; and Susan who always wore a cheerful look to his face could now yield to her real feelings.

She sat at some little distance from the bed and tried to work, and every now and then looked up to watch him, and again and again her eyes were blinded; and she laid down her work, for her heart said to her "A few short days and you will see him no more."

Mrs. Davies too was grave and sad. She had made the house neat and clean from cellar to garret, and now he who should have enjoyed it lay there sick unto death.

"Susan" said she "I doubt I have been sent here to set his house in order against his —"

"Oh! don't tell me that" cried Susan, and she burst into a fit of sobbing, for Mrs. Davies had harped her own fear.

"Take care, he is waking, Susan. He must not see us."

"Oh no!" and the next moment she was by her patient's side with a cheerful look and voice and manner well calculated to keep any male heart from sinking sick or well.

Heavy heart and hopeful face! such a nurse was Susan Merton. This kind deception became more difficult every day. Her patient wasted and wasted; and the anxious look that is often seen on a death-stricken man's face showed itself. Mrs. Davies saw it and Susan saw it; but the sick man himself as yet had never spoken of his decease: and both Mrs. Davies and Susan often wondered that he did not seem to see his real state.

But one day it so happened that he was light-headed and greatly excited, holding a conversation. His eye was flashing, and he spoke in bursts, and then stopped awhile and seemed to be listening in irritation to some arguments with which he did not agree.

The enthusiast was building a prison in the air. A prison with a farm, a school, and a manufactory attached. Here were to be combined the good points of every system, and others of his own.

"Yes," said he in answer to his imaginary companion, "there shall be both separation and silence for those whose moral case it suits — for all perhaps at first — but not for all always. Away with your Morrison's pill-system; your childish monotony of moral treatment in cases varying and sometimes opposed."

"Yes, but I would. I would allow a degree of intercourse between such as were disposed to confirm each other in good. Watch them? why of course — and closely too."

"Intelligent labor for every creature in the place. No tickets-of-leave to let the hypocritical or self-deceiving ones loose upon the world."

"No, I test their repentance first with a little liberty."

"How? Why fly them with a string before I let them fly free!"

"Occupation provided outside the prison-gates; instead of ticket-of-leave let the candidate work there on parole and come into the prison at night."

"Some will break parole and run away? All the better. Then you know their real character. Telegraph them. You began by photographing them — send their likenesses to every town — catch them — cell them."

"Indeed! And pray what would these same men have done had you given them the ticket-of-leave instead?"

"By the present plan your pseudo-convert commits a dozen crimes before his hypocrisy is suspected; by ours a single offence warns you and arms you against him."

"Systems avail less than is supposed. For good or ill all depends on your men — not your machinery."

"We have got rid of the old patch that rotted our new garment. When I first was chaplain of a gaol —"

His mind had gone forward some years.

"Then we were mad — thought a new system could be worked by men of the past, by gaolers and turnkeys belonging to the dark and brutal age that came before ours."

"Those dark days are passed. Now we have really a governor and warders instead of gaolers and turnkeys. The nation has discovered these are high offices, not mean ones."

"Yes, Lepel, yes! Our officers are men picked out of all England for intelligence and humanity. They co-operate with me. Our gaol is one of the nation's eyes -- it is a school thank heaven it is not a dungeon! — I am in bed!"

With these last words he had come to himself, and oh, the sad contrast! Butcherly blockheads in these high places, and himself lying sick and powerless, unable to lift a hand for the cause he loved.

The sigh that burst from him seemed to tear his very heart; but the very next moment he put his hands humbly together and said "God's will be done!" Yet one big tear gathered in his lion eye, and spite of all trickled down his cheek while he said, "God's will be done."

Susan saw it, and turned quickly away and hid her face; but

he called her, and though his lip quivered his voice was pretty firm.

"Dear friend, God can always find instruments. The good work will be done, though not by me."

So then Susan judged by these few words, and the tear that trickled from his closed eyes, that he saw what others saw and did not look to live now.

She left the room in haste not to agitate him by the sorrow she could no longer restrain or conceal. The patient lay quiet, languidly dozing.

Now about four o'clock in the afternoon the surgeon came to the door; but what surprised Susan was that a man accompanied him whom she only just knew by sight, and who had never been there before — the turnkey Hodges. The pair spoke together in a low tone; and Susan, who was looking down from an upper window, could not hear what they said: but the discussion lasted a minute or two before they rang the bell. Susan came down herself and admitted them. But as she was leading the way up-stairs her aunt suddenly bounced out of the parlour looking unaccountably red, and said,

"I will go up with them Susan."

Susan said "If you like aunt," but felt some little surprise at Mrs. Davies's brisk manner.

At the sick man's door Mrs. Davies paused, and said drily with a look at Hodges "Who shall I say is come with you?"

"Mr. Hodges, one of the warders, is come to inquire after his reverence's health" replied the surgeon smoothly.

"I must ask him first whether he will receive a stranger."

"Admit him" was Mr. Eden's answer.

The men entered the room, and were welcomed with a kind but feeble smile from the sick man.

"Sit down Hodges."

The surgeon felt his pulse and wrote a prescription; for it is a tradition of the elders that at each visit the doctor must do some overt act of medicine. After this he asked the patient how he felt.

Mr. Eden turned an eloquent look upon him in reply.

"I must speak to Hodges" said he. "Come near me Hodges" said he in a kind voice, "perhaps I may not have many more opportunities of giving you a word of friendly exhortation."

Here a short dissatisfied contemptuous grunt was heard at the window-seat.

"Did you speak Mrs. Davies?"

"No I didn't" was the somewhat sharp reply.

"We should improve every occasion Mrs. Davies, and I want this poor man to know that a dying man may feel happy and hope everything from God's love and mercy, if he has loved and pitied his brothers and sisters of Adam's race."

When he called himself a dying man, Hodges, who was looking uncomfortable and at the floor, raised his head, and the surgeon and he interchanged a rapid look; it was observed though not by Mr. Eden.

That gentleman seeing Hodges wear an abashed look which he misunderstood, and aiming to improve him for the future, not punish him for the past, said "But first let me thank you for coming to see me," and with these words he put his hand out of the bed with a kind smile to Hodges. His gentle intention was roughly interrupted: Mrs. Davies flung down her work and came like a flaming Turkey-cock across the floor in a moment, and seized his arm and flung it back into the bed.

"No ye don't! ye shan't give your hand to any such rubbish."

"Mrs. Davies!"

"Yes, Mrs. Davies; you don't know what they've come here for — I overheard ye at the door! You have got an enemy in that filthy gaol, haven't you sir? Well! this man comes from him to see how bad you are — they were colloguing together backwards and forwards ever so long, and I heard 'em — it is not out of any kindness or good will in the world. Now suppose you march out the way you came in" screamed Mrs. Davies.

"Mrs. Davies be quiet, and let me speak?"

"Of course I will sir" said the woman with a ludicrously sudden calm and coaxing tone.

There was a silence; Mr. Eden eyed the men. Small guilt peeped from them by its usual little signs.

Mr. Eden's lip curled magnificently.

"So you did not come to see me — you were sent by that man. (Mrs. Davies be quiet; curiosity is not a crime, like torturing the defenceless) Mr. Hawes sent you that you might tell him how soon his victims are like to lose their only earthly defender."

The men colored and stammered; Mrs. Davies covered her face with her apron and rocked herself on her chair.

Mr. Eden flowed gently on.

"Tell your master that I have settled all my worldly affairs, and caused all my trifling debts to be paid.

"Tell him that I have made my will! (I have provided in it for the turnkey Evans — he will know why).

"Tell him you found my cheeks fallen away, my eye hollow, and my face squalid.

"Tell him my Bible was by my side, and even the prison was mingling with other memories as I drifted from earth and all its thorns and tears. All was blunted but the Christian's faith and trust in his Redeemer.

"Tell him that there is a cold dew upon my forehead.

"Tell him that you found me by the side of the river Jordan, looking across the cold river to the heavenly land, where they who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb walk in white garments, and seem even as I gaze to welcome and beckon me to join them.

"And then tell him" cried he in a new voice like a flash of lightning "that he has brought me back to earth. You have come and reminded me that if I die a wolf is waiting to tear my sheep. I thank you, and I tell you," roared he, "as the Lord liveth and as my soul liveth, I will not die but live — and do the Lord's work—and put my foot yet on that caitiff's neck who sent you to inspect my decaying body you poor tools—THE DOOR!"

He was up in the bed by magic, towering above them all, and he pointed to the door with a tremendous gesture and an eye that flamed. Mrs. Davies caught the electric spark, in a moment she tore the door open, and the pair bundled down the stairs before that terrible eye and finger.

"Susan — Susan!" — Susan heard his elevated voice, and came running in in great anxiety.

"They say there is no such thing as friendship between a man and a woman. — Prove to me this is a falsehood!"

"It is sir."

"Do me a service."

"Ah! — what is it?"

"Go a journey for me."

"I will go all round England for you Mr. Eden" cried the girl panting and flushing.

"My writing desk! — it is to a village sixty miles from this, but you will be there in four hours; in that village lives the man who can cure me if any one can."

"What will you take with you?" asked Mrs. Davies all in a bustle.

"A comb and brush, and a chemise."

"I'll have them down in a twinkling."

The note was written.

"Take this to his house, see him, tell him the truth, and bring him with you to-morrow — it will be fifty pounds out of his pocket to leave his patients — but I think he will come. Oh yes! he will come — for auld lang syne."

"Good-bye Mr. Eden — God bless you aunt. I want to be gone; I shall bring him if I have to carry him in my arms." And with these words Susan was gone.

"Now, good Mrs. Davies, give me the Bible. Often has that book soothed the torn nerves as well as the bleeding heart — and let no one come here to grieve or vex me for twenty-four hours — and fling that man's draught away, I want to live."

Mrs. Davies had heard Hodges and Fry aright. Mr. Eden by her clue had interpreted the visit aright, with this exception, that he overrated his own importance in Mr. Hawes's eyes. For Hawes mocked at the chaplain's appeal to the Home Office ever since the office had made his tools the virtual referees.

Still a shade of uneasiness remained. During the progress of this long duel Eden had let fall two disagreeable hints: one was that he would spend a thousand pounds in setting such

prisoners, as survived Hawes's discipline, to indict him, and the other that he would appeal to the public press.

This last threat had touched our man of brass; for if there is one thing upon earth that another thing does not like, your moral malefactor, who happens to be out of the law's reach, hates and shivers at the New Bailey in Printing-house-yard. So upon the whole Mr. Hawes thought that the best thing Mr. Eden could do would be to go to heaven without any more fuss.

"Yes, that will be the best for all parties."

He often questioned the doctor in his blunt way how soon the desired event might be expected to come off, if at all. The doctor still answered per ambages, ut mos oraculis.

"I see I must go myself — No I won't, I'll send Fry. Ah here is Hodges. Go and see the parson, and come back and tell me whether he is like to live or like to die. Mr. Sawyer here can't speak English about a patient; he would do it to oblige me if he could, but — him, he can't."

"Don't much like the job" demurred Hodges sulkily.

"What matters what you like? You must all do things you don't like in a prison, or get into trouble."

More accustomed to obey than to reflect, Hodges yielded, but at Mr. Eden's very door, his commander being now out of sight, his reluctance revived; and this led to an amicable discussion in which the surgeon made him observe how very ferocious and impatient of opposition the governor had lately become.

"He can get either of us dismissed if we offend him."

So the pair of cowards did what they were bid — and got themselves trode upon a bit. It only remains to be said that as they trudged back together a little venom worked in their little hearts. They hated both duellists — one for treating them like dogs, the other for sending them where they had got treated like dogs; and they disliked each other for seeing them treated like dogs. One bitterness they escaped, it did not occur to them to hate themselves for being dogs.

If you force a strong-willed stick out of its bent, with what

fury it flies back ad statum quo or a little farther when the coercion is removed. So, hard-grained Hawes, his fears of the higher powers removed, returned with a spring to his intermitted habits.

There was no incarnate obstacle now to "discipline." There was a provisional chaplain, but that chaplain was worthy Mr. Jones, who having visited the town for a month had consented for a week or two to supply the sick man's place, and did supply it so far as a good clock can replace a man. Viewing himself now as something between an officer and a guest he was less likely to show fight than ever.

Earnest Hawes pilloried, flung into black dungeons, stole beds and gas-light, crushed souls with mysterious threats, and bodies with a horrible mixture of those tortures that madden and those other tortures that exhaust. No Spanish Inquisitor was ever a greater adept at this double move than earnest Hawes. The means by which he could make any prisoner appear refractory have already been described, but in the case of one stout fellow whom he wanted to discipline he now went a step further: he slipped into the yard and slily clogged one of the cranks with a weight which he inserted inside the box and attached to the machinery. This contrivance would have beaten Hercules and made him seem idle to any one not in the secret. In short this little blockhead bade fair to become one of Mr. Carlyle's great men. He combined the earnest sneak with the earnest butcher.

Barbarous times are not wholly expunged as book-makers affect to fear. Legislators, moralists, and writers, (I don't include book-makers under that title) try to clap their extinguishers on them with God's help; but they still contrive to shoot some lurid specimens of themselves into civilised epochs. Such a black ray of the narrow, self-deceiving, stupid, bloody past was earnest Hawes.

Not a tithe of his exploits can be recorded here, for though he played upon many souls and bodies, he repeated the same notes — hunger, thirst, the blackness of darkness, crucifixion, solitude, loss of sleep — so that a description of all his feats

would be a catalogue of names subjected to the above tortures, and be dry as well as revolting.

I shall describe therefore only the grand result of all, and a case or two that varied by a shade the monotony of discipline. He kept one poor lad without any food at all from Saturday morning till Sunday at twelve o'clock, and made him work; and for his Sunday dinner gave the famished wretch six ounces of bread and a can of water. He strapped one prisoner up in the pillory for twenty-four hours, and directed him to be fed in it. This prisoner had a short neck, and the cruel collar would not let him eat, so that the tortures of Tantalus were added to crucifixion. The earnest beast put a child of eleven years old into a strait-waistcoat for three days, then kept him three days on bread and water, and robbed him of his bed and his gas for fourteen days. We none of us know the meaning of these little punishments so vast beyond our experience; but in order to catch a glimmer of the meaning of the last item, we must remember first that the cells admit but little light, and that the gas is the prisoner's sunlight for the hour or two of rest from hard toil that he is allowed before he is ordered to bed, and next that a prisoner has but two sets of clothes; those he stands upright in, and his bed-clothes; these are rolled up inside the bed every morning. When therefore a prisoner was robbed of his bed, he was robbed of the means of keeping himself warm as well as of that rest, without which life soon comes to a full stop.

Having victimized this child's tender body as aforesaid Mr. Hawes made a cut at his soul. He stopped his chapel.

One ought not to laugh at a worm coming between another worm and his God, and saying "No! you shall not hear of God to-day — you have displeased a functionary whose discipline takes precedence of his;" and it is to be observed, that though this blockhead did not in one sense comprehend the nature of his own impious act any more than a Hottentot would, yet as broad as he saw he saw keenly.

The one-ideaed man wanted to punish; and deprivation of chapel is a bitter punishment to a prisoner under the separate and silent system.

And lay this down as a rule, whenever in this tale a punishment is recorded as having been inflicted by Hawes, however light it may appear to you who never felt it, bring your intelligence to bear on it — weigh the other conditions of a prisoner's miserable existence it was added to, and in every case you will find it was a blow with a sledge-hammer; in short, to comprehend Hawes and his fraternity it is necessary to make a mental effort and comprehend the meaning of the word "accumulation."

The first execution of biped Carter took place about a week after Mr. Eden was laid postrate.

It is not generally very difficult to outwit an imbecile, and the governor enmeshed Carter, made him out refractory and crucified him. The poor soul did not hallo at first, for he remembered they had not cut his throat the last time, as he thought they were going to do (he had seen a pig first made fast — then stuck). But when the bitter cramps came on, he began to howl and cry most frightfully; so that Hawes, who was talking to the surgeon in the centre of the building, started and came at once to the place. Mr. Sawyer came with him. They tried different ways of quieting him, in vain. They went to a distance, as Mr. Eden had suggested, but it was no use; he was howling now from pain, not fear.

"Gag him!" roared Hawes, "it is scandalous; I hate a noise."

"Better loose him," suggested the surgeon.

Hawes blighted him with a look. "What! and let him beat me."

"There is no gag in the prison," said Fry.

"A pretty prison without a gag in it," said Hawes; the only reflection he was ever heard to cast on his model gaol; then, with sudden ferocity he turned on Sawyer. "What is the use of you; don't you know anything for your money? can't all your science stop this brute's windpipe; — you!"

Science thus blandly invoked came to the aid of inhumanity.

"Humph! have you got any salt?"

"Salt!" roared Hawes, "what is the use of salt? Oh! ay, I see! run and get a pound, and look sharp with it."

They brought the salt.

"Now, will you hold your noise? — then, give it him."

The scientific operator watched his opportunity, and when the poor biped's mouth was open howling, crammed a handful of the salt into it. He spat it out as well as he could, but some of it dissolved by the saliva found its way down his throat. The look of amazement and distress that followed was most amusing to the operators.

"That was a good idea, doctor," cried Hawes.

The triumph was premature. Carter's cries were choked for a moment by his astonishment. But the next, finding a fresh torture added to the first, he howled louder than ever. Then the governor seized the salt, powdered a good handful, and avoiding his teeth crammed it suddenly into the poor creature's mouth. He spat it furiously out, and the brine fell like sea-spray upon all the operators, especially on Hawes, who swore at the biped, and called him a beast; and promised him a long spell of the cross for his nastiness. After Hawes, Fry must take his turn; and so now these three creatures, to whom heaven had given reason, combined their strength and their sacred reason to torture and degrade one of those whom the French call "bêtes du bon Dieu,"— a heaven-afflicted—heaven-pitied brother.

They respected neither the hapless wight, nor his owner. Whenever he opened his mouth with the instinct that makes animals proclaim their hurts and appeal for pity on the chance of a heart being within hearing, then did these show their sense of his appeal thus: One of the party crammed the stinging salt down his throat; the others watched him, and kept clear of the brine that he spat vehemently out, and a loud report of laughter followed instantly each wild grimace and convulsion of fear and torture. Thus they employed their reason, and flouted as well as tortured him who had less.

"Haw! haw! haw! haw! haw!"

No lightning came down from Heaven upon these merry

souls. The idiot's spittle did not burn them when it fell on them. ALL THE WORSE FOR THEM!

They left Carter for hours in the pillory, and soon a violent thirst was added to his sufferings. Prolonged pain brings on cruel thirst, and many a poor fellow suffered horribly from it during the last hours of his pillory. But in this case the salt he had swallowed made it more vehement. Most men go through life and never know thirst. It is a frightful torture, as any novice would have learned who had seen Carter at six in the evening of this cruel day. The poor wretch's throat was so parched he could hardly breathe. His eyes were all bloodshot and his livid tongue lolled stringless and powerless out of his gasping mouth. He would have given diamonds for drops of water.

The earnest man going his rounds of duty saw his pitiable state and forbade relief till the number of hours he had appointed for his punishment should be completed. Discipline before all!

There was one man in the gaol, just one, who could no longer view this barbarity unmoved. His heart had been touched and his understanding wakened, and he saw these prodigies of cruelty in their true light. But he was afraid of Hawes, and unfortunately the others by an instinct felt their comrade was no longer one of them and watched him closely. But his intelligence was awakened with his humanity. After much thought he hit upon this; he took the works out of his watch — an old hunting watch — and strolling into the yard, dipped the case into the bucket, then closed it; and soon after getting close to Carter, and between him and Fry, he affected to examine the prisoner's collar, and then hastily gave him a watchful of cold water. Carter sucked it with frightful avidity, and small as the draught was no mortal can say what consequences were averted by it.

Evans was dreadfully out of spirits. His ally lay dying and his enemy triumphed. He looked to be turned out of the gaol at the next meeting of magistrates. But when he had given the

idiot his watch to drink out of an unwonted warmth and courage seemed to come into his heart.

This touch of humanity coming suddenly among the most hellish of all fiends — men of system — was like the little candle in a window that throws its beams so far when we are bewildered in a murky night. For the place was now a moral coal-hole. The dungeons at Rome that lie under the wing of Roderick Borgia's successors are not a more awful remnant of antiquity or a fouler blot on the age, on the law, on the land, and on human nature.

A thick dark pall of silence and woe hung over its huge walls. If a voice was heard above a whisper it was sure to be either a cry of anguish or a fierce command to inflict anguish. Two or three were crucified every day; the rest expected crucifixion from morning till night. No man felt safe an hour; no man had the means of averting punishment; all were at the mercy of a tyrant. Threats frightful, fierce, and mysterious, hung like weights over every soul and body. Whenever a prisoner met an officer, he cowered and hurried crouching by like a dog passing a man with a whip in his hand; and as he passed he trembled at the thunder of his own footsteps, and wished to Heaven they would not draw so much attention to him by ringing so clear through that huge silent tomb. When an officer met the governor he tried to slip by with a hurried salute lest he should be stopped, abused, and sworn at.

The earnest man fell hardest upon the young; boys and children were favourite victims; but his favourites of all were poor Robinson and little Josephs. These were at the head of the long list he crucified, he parched, he famished, he robbed of prayer, of light, of rest, and hope. He disciplined the sick; he closed the infirmary again. That large room, furnished with comforts, nurses, and air, was an inconsistency.

"A new prison is a collection of cells," said Hawes. The infirmary was a spot in the sun. The exercise yard in this prison was a twelve-box stable for creatures concluded to be wild beasts. The labor-yard was a fifteen-stall stable for ditto. The house of God an eighty-stalled stable, into which the wild

beasts were dispersed for public worship made private. Here in early days, before Hawes was ripe, they assembled apart and repeated prayers; and sang hymns on Sunday. But Hawes found out that though the men were stabled apart their voices were refractory and mingled in the air, and with their voices their hearts might, who knows? He pointed this out to the justices, who shook their sculls and stopped the men's responses and hymns. These animals cut the choruses out of the English liturgy with as little ceremony and as good effect as they would have cut the choruses out of Hændel's "Messiah," if the theory they were working had been a musical instead of a moral one.

So far so good; but the infirmary had escaped Justice Shallow and Justice Woodcock. Hawes abolished that.

Discipline before all. Not because a fellow is sick is he to break discipline.

So the sick lay in their narrow cells gasping in vain for fresh air, gasping in vain for some cooling drink, or some little simple delicacy to incite their enfeebled appetite.

The dying were locked up at the fixed hour for locking up, and found dead at the fixed hour for opening. How they had died — no one knew. At what hour they had died — no one knew. Whether in some choking struggle a human hand might have saved them by changing a suffocating position or the like — no one knew.

But this all knew — that these our sinful brethren had died, not like men, but like vultures in the great desert. They were separated from their kith and kin, who however brutal would have said a kind word and done a tender thing or two for them at that awful hour; and nothing allowed them in exchange, not even the routine attentions of a prison nurse; they were in darkness and alone when the king of terrors came to them and wrestled with them: all men had turned their backs on them, no creature near to wipe the dews of death, to put a cool hand to the brow, or soften the intensity of the last sad sigh that carried their souls from earth. Thus they passed away, punished lawlessly by the law till they succumbed, and then since they

were no longer food for torture, ignored by the law and abandoned by the human race.

They locked up one dying man at eight o'clock. At midnight the thirst of death came on him. He prayed for a drop of water but there was none to hear him. Parched and gasping the miserable man got out of bed and groped and groped for his tin mug, but before he could drink the death agony seized him. When they unlocked him in the morning they found him a corpse on the floor with the mug in his hand and the water spilled on the floor. They wrenched the prison property out of its dead hand, and flung the carcass itself upon the bed as if it had been the clay cast of a dog, not the remains of a man.

All was of a piece. The living tortured; the dying abandoned; the dead kicked out of the way. Of these three the living were the most unfortunate, and among the living Robinson and Josephs. Never since the days of Cain was existence made more bitter to two hapless creatures than to these — above all to Josephs.

His day began thus: — Between breakfast and dinner he was set five thousand revolutions of a heavy crank; when he could not do it his dinner was taken away and a few crumbs of bread and a can of water given him instead. Between his bread and water time and six o'clock if the famished worn-out lad could not do five thousand more revolutions, and make up the previous deficiency, he was punished ad libitum. As the whole thing from first to last was beyond his powers, he never succeeded in performing these preposterous tasks. He was threatened, vilified, and tortured every day and every hour of it.

Human beings can bear great sufferings if you give them periods of ease between; and beneficent nature allows for this, and when she means us to suffer short of death she lashes us at intervals; were it otherwise we should succumb under a tithe of what we suffer intermittently.

But Hawes, besides his cruelty, was a noodle. He belonged to a knot of theorists into whose hands the English gaols are fast falling; a set of shallow dreamers, who being greater dunces and greater asses than four men out of every six that

pass you in Fleet-street or Broadway at any hour, think themselves wiser than Nature and her Author. Josephs suffered body and spirit without intermission. The result was that his flesh withered on his bones; his eyes were dim and seemed to lie at the bottom of two caverns; he crawled stiffly and slowly instead of walking. He was not sixteen years of age, yet Hawes had extinguished his youth and blotted out all its signs but one. Had you met this figure in the street you would have said —

"What, an old man and no beard."

One day as Robinson happened to be washing the corridor with his beaver up, what he took for a small but aged man passed him, shambling stiffly, with joints stiffened by perpetual crucifixion and rheumatism, that had ensued from perpetually being wetted through. This figure had his beaver down: at sight of Robinson he started, and instantly went down on his knee and untied both shoe strings; then while tying them again slowly he whispered —

"Robinson, I am Josephs, don't look towards me."

Robinson scrubbing the wall with more vigor than before whispered, "How are they using you now boy?"

"Hush! don't speak so loud. Robinson — they are killing me."

"The ruffians! They are trying all they know to kill me too."

"Fry coming."

"Hist!" said Robinson as Josephs crept away; and having scraped off a grain of whitewash with his nail he made a little white mark on his trowser just above his calf for Josephs to know him by, should they meet next time with visors both down. Josephs gave a slight and rapid signal of intelligence as he disappeared. Two days after this they met on the staircase. The boy, who now looked at every prisoner's trowsers for the white mark, recognized Robinson at some distance and began to speak before they met.

"I can't go on much longer like this."

"No more can I."

"I shall go to father."

"Why where is he?"

"He is dead."

"I don't care how soon I go there either, but not till I have sent Hawes on before — not for all the world. Pass me, and then come back."

They met again.

"Keep up your heart, boy, till his reverence gets well, or goes to heaven. If he lives he will save us somehow. If he dies — I'll tell you a secret. I know where there is a brick I think I can loosen. I mean to smash that beast's scull with it, and then you will be all right, and my heart will feel like a prince."

"Oh! don't do that" said Josephs piteously. "Better for us he should murder us than we him."

"Murder!" cried Robinson contemptuously. And there was no time to say any more.

After this many days passed before these two could get a syllable together. But one day after chapel as the men were being told off to their several tasks Robinson recognised the boy by his figure, and jogging his elbow withdrew a little apart; Josephs followed him, and this time Robinson was the first speaker.

"We shall never see Mr. Eden alive again boy" said he in a faltering voice. Then in a low gloomy tone he muttered, "I have loosened the brick: the day I lose all hope that day I send Hawes home." And the thief pointed towards the cellar.

"The day you have no more hope, Robinson; that day has come to me this fortnight and more. He tells me every day he will make my life hell to me, and I am sure it has been nothing else ever since I came here."

"Keep up your heart boy; he hasn't long to live."

"He will live too long for me. I can't stay here any longer. You and I shan't often chat together again; perhaps never."

"Don't talk so laddie. Keep up your heart — for my sake."

One bitter tearing sob was all the reply. And so these two parted.

This was just after breakfast. At dinner-time Josephs, not

having performed an impossible task, was robbed of his dinner. A little bread and water was served out to him in the yard, and he was set on the crank again with fearful menaces. In particular Mr. Hawes repeated his favourite threat — "I'll make your life hell to you." Josephs groaned, but what could a boy of fifteen do over-tasked and famished for a month past and fitter now for a hospital than for hard labor of any sort? At three o'clock his progress on the crank was so slow that Mr. Hawes ordered him to be crucified on the spot.

His obedient myrmidons for the fiftieth time seized the lad and crushed him in the jacket, throttled him in the collar, and pinned him to the wall, and this time, the first time for a long while, the prisoner remonstrated loudly.

"Why not kill me at once and put me out of my misery!"

"Hold your tongue."

"You know I can't do the task you set me. You know it as well as I do."

"Hold your tongue you insolent young villain. Strap him tighter, Fry."

"Oh no! no! no! don't go to strap me tighter or you will cut me in half — don't Mr. Fry. I will hold my tongue sir." Then he turned his hollow mournful eyes on Hawes and said gently, "It can't last much longer you know."

"It shall last till I break you, you obstinate whining dog. You are hardly used are you? Wait till to-morrow, I'll show you that I have only been playing with you as yet. But I have got a punishment in store for you that will make you wish you were in hell."

Hawes stood over the martyr fiercely threatening him. The martyr shut his eyes. It seemed as though the enraged Hawes would end by striking him. He winced with his eyes. He could not wince with any other part of his body, so tight was it jammed together, and jammed against the wali.

Hawes however did but repeat his threat of some new torture on the morrow that should far eclipse all he had yet endured; and shaking his fist at his helpless body left him with his torture.

One hour of bitter, racking, unremitting anguish had hardly rolled over this young head, ere his frame weakened by famine and perpetual violence began to give the usual signs that he would soon sham — swoon we call it when it occurs to any but a prisoner. As my readers have never been in Mr. Hawes's man-press, and as attempts have been made to impose on the inexperience of the public, and represent the man-press as restriction not torture, I will shortly explain why sooner or later all the men that were crucified in it ended by shamming.

Were you ever seized at night with a violent cramp? then you have instantly with a sort of wild and alarmed rapidity changed the posture which had cramped you; ay though the night was ever so cold you have sprung out of bed sooner than lie cramped. If the cramp would not go in less than half a minute, that half-minute was long and bitter. As for existing cramped half an hour that you never thought possible. Imagine now the severest cramp you ever felt artificially prolonged for hours and hours. Imagine yourself cramped in a vice, no part of you moveable a hair's breadth, except your hair and your eye-lids. Imagine the fierce cramp growing and growing, and rising like a tide of agony higher and higher above nature's endurance, and you will cease to wonder that a man always sunk under Hawes's man-press. Now then add to the cramp a high circular saw raking the throat, jacket straps cutting and burning the flesh of the back — add to this the freezing of the blood in the body deprived so long of all motion whatever (for motion of some sort or degree is a condition of vitality), and a new and far more rational wonder arises, that any man could be half an hour cut, sawed, crushed, cramped, Mazeppa'd thus, without shamming — still less be four, six, eight hours in it, and come out a living man.

The young martyr's lips were turning blue, his face was twitching convulsively, when a word was unexpectedly put in for him by a bystander.

The turnkey Evans had been half sullenly half sorrowfully watching him for some minutes past.

A month or two ago the lips of a prisoner turning blue, and

his skin twitching, told Evans nothing. He saw these things without seeing them. He was cruel from stupidity — from blockhead to butcher there is but a step. Like the English public he *realized* nothing where prisoners were concerned. But Mr. Eden had awakened his intelligence, and his heart waked with it naturally.

Now when he saw lips turning blue and eyes rolling in sad despair, and skin twitching convulsively, it occurred to him — "this creature must be suffering very badly," and the next step was, "let me see what is hurting him so."

Evans now stood over Josephs and examined him. "Mr. Fry," said he doggedly, "is not this overdoing it?"

"What d'ye mean, we are to obey orders I suppose?"

"Of course, but there was no need to draw the jacket straps so tight as all this. Boy's bellows can't hardly work for 'em."

He now passed his hand round the hollow of the lad's back.

"I thought so" cried he; "I can't get my finger between the straps and the poor fellow's flesh, and, good heavens, I can feel the skin rising like a ridge on each side of the straps; it is a black, burning shame to use any Christian like this."

These words were hardly out of the turnkey's mouth when a startling cry came suddenly from poor Josephs; a sudden, wild, piercing scream of misery. In that bitter, despairing cry burst out the pent-up anguish of weeks, and the sense of injustice and cruelty more than human. The poor thing gave this one terrible cry. Heaven forbid that you should hear such a one in life, as I hear his in my heart, and then he fell to sobbing as if his whole frame would burst.

They were not much, these rough words of sympathy, but they were the first — the first words too of humanity and reason a turnkey had spoken in his favor since he came into this hell. Above all the first in which it had ever been hinted or implied that his flesh was human flesh. The next moment he began to cry, but that was not so easy. He soon lost his breath and couldn't cry, though his very life depended on it. Tears give relief. Dame Nature said, "Cry my suffering son, cry now, and relieve that heart swelling with cruelty and wrong."

But Hawes's infernal machine said, "No, you shall not cry. I give you no room to cry in." The cruel straps jammed him so close his swelling heart could but half heave. The jagged collar bit his throat so hard he could but give three or four sobs and then the next choked him. The struggle between Nature panting and writhing for relief, and the infernal man-press, was so bitter strong that the boy choked and blackened and gasped as one in the last agony.

"Undo him," cried Evans hastily, "or we shall kill him amongst us."

"Bucket," said the experienced Fry quite coolly.

The bucket was at hand — its contents were instantly discharged over Josephs' head.

A cry like a dying hare — two or three violent gasps — and he was quiet all but a strong shiver that passed from head to foot; only with the water that now trickled from his hair down his face scalding tears from his young eyes fell to the ground undistinguished from the water by any eye but God's.

At six o'clock Hawes came into the yard and ordered Fry to take him down. Fry took this opportunity of informing against Evans for his mild interference.

"He will pay for that along with the rest," said Hawes with an oath.

Then he turned on Josephs, who halted stiffly by him on his way to his cell.

"I 'll make your life hell to you you young vagabond — you are hardly used are you; all you have ever known isn't a stroke with a feather to what I 'll make you know by-and-by. Wait till to-morrow comes, you shall see what I can do when I am put to it."

Josephs sobbed, but answered nothing, and crawled sore, stiff, dripping, shivering to his cell. In that miserable hole he would at least be at peace.

He found the gas lighted. He was glad, for he was drenched through and bitterly cold. He crept up to the little gaslight and put his dead white hands over it and got a little warmth into them; he blessed this spark of light and warmth; he looked

lovingly down on it, it was his only friend in the gaol, his companion in the desolate cell. He wished he could gather it into his bosom; then it would warm his heart and his blighted flesh and aching shivering bones.

While he hung shivering over his spark of light and warmth and comfort, a key was put into his door. "Ah! here 's supper," thought he, "and I am so hungry." It was not supper, it was Fry who came in empty handed leaving the door open. Fry went to his gaslight and put his finger and thumb on the screw.

"Oh! it burns all right Mr. Fry," said Josephs, "it won't go any higher, thank you."

"No, it won't," said Fry drily, and turned it out leaving the cell in utter darkness.

"There I told you so," said Josephs pettishly, "now you have been and turned it out."

"Yes, I have been and turned it out," replied Fry with a brutal laugh, "and it won't be turned on again for fourteen days, so the governor says however, and I suppose he knows," and Fry went out chuckling.

Josephs burst out sobbing and almost screaming at this last stroke; it seemed to hurt him more than his fiercer tortures. He sobbed so wildly and so loud that Mr. Jones passing on the opposite corridor heard him and beckoned to Evans to open the cell.

They found the boy standing in the middle of his dungeon shaking with cold in his drenched clothes and sobbing with his whole body. It was frightful to see and hear the agony and despair of one so young in years, so old in misery.

Mr. Jones gave him words of common-place consolation. Mr. Jones tried to persuade him that patience was the best cure.

"Be patient, and do not irritate the governor any more — the storm will pass."

He seemed to Josephs as one that mocketh. Jones's were such little words to fling in the face of a great despair; to chatter unreasonable consolation was to mock his unutterable misery of soul and body.

Mr. Jones was one of those who sprinkle a burning mountain

with a tea-spoonful of milk and water, and then go away and make sure they have put it out. When he was gone with this impression, Evans took down the boy's bed and said —

"Don't ye cry now like that; it makes me ill to hear any Christian cry like that."

"Oh, Mr. Evans! oh! oh! oh! oh! What have I done? Oh, my mother! my mother! my mother!"

Evans winced. What! had he a mother too? If she could see him now! and perhaps he was her darling though he was a prisoner. He shook the bed-clothes out and took hold of the shivering boy and with kind force made him lie down; then he twisted the clothes tight round him.

"You will get warm, if you will but lie quiet and not think about it."

Josephs did what he was bid. He could not still his sobs, but he turned his mournful eyes on Evans with a look of wonder at meeting with kindness from a human being, and half doubtingly put out his hand. So then Evans to comfort him took his hand and shook it several times in his hard palm, and said —

"Good night. You 'll soon get warm, and don't think of it — that is the best way;" and Evans ran away in the middle of a sentence, for the look of astonishment the boy wore at his humanity went through the man's penitent heart like an arrow.

Josephs lay quiet and his sobs began gradually to go down, and, as Evans had predicted, some little warmth began to steal over his frame; but he could not comply with all Evans's instructions; he could not help thinking of it. For all that, as soon as he got a little warm, Nature, who knew how much her tortured son needed repose, began to weigh down his eyelids, and he dozed. He often started, he often murmured a prayer for pity as his mind acted over again the scenes of his miserable existence; but still he dosed, and sleep was stealing over him. Sleep! life's nurse sent from heaven to create us anew day by day! — sleep that has blunted and gradually cured a hundred thousand sorrows for one that has yielded to any moral remedy — sleep! that has blunted and so cured by degrees a million fleshly ills for one that drugs or draughts have ever reached —

sleep had her arm round this poor child and was drawing him gently gently, slowly slowly, to her bosom — when suddenly his cell seemed to him to be all in a blaze, and a rough hand shook him, and a harsh voice sounded in his ear.

"Come, get up out of that, youngster," it said, and the hand almost jerked him off the floor.

"What is the matter?" inquired Josephs yawning.

"Matter is, I want your bed."

Josephs rose half stupid, and Hodges rolled up his bed and blanket.

"Are you really going to rob me of my bed?" inquired Josephs slowly and firmly.

"Rob you, you young dog? Here is the governor's order. No bed and gas for fourteen days."

"No bed nor gas for fourteen days! Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Oh, you laugh at that do you?"

"I laugh at Mr. Hawes thinking to keep me out of bed for fourteen days, a poor worn-out boy like me. You tell Hawes I 'll find a bed in spite of him long before fourteen days."

Hodges looked about the cell for this other bed.

"Come," said he, "you mustn't chaff the officers. The governor will serve you out enough without your giving us any of your sauce."

Hodges was going with the bed. Josephs stopped him. The boy took this last blow quite differently from the gas; no impatience or burst of sorrow now.

"Won't you bid me good-bye, Mr. Hodges?" asked he.

"Why not? Good night."

"That isn't what I mean. Mr. Evans gave me his hand."

"Did he? what for?"

"And so must you. Oh, you may as well, Mr. Hodges. I never came to you and took away your little bit of light and your little bit of sleep. So you can take my hand if I can give it you. You will be sorry afterwards if you say no."

"There it is — what the better are you for that you young fool. I 'll tell you what it is you are turning soft. I don't know

what to make of you. I shall come to your cell the first thing in the morning."

"Ay, do, Mr. Hodges," said Josephs, "and then you won't be sorry you shook hands at night."

At this moment the boy's supper was thrust through the trap-door; it was not the supper by law appointed, but six ounces of bread and a can of water.

Hodges, now that he had touched the prisoner's hand, felt his first spark of something bordering on sympathy. He looked at the grub half ashamed and made a wry face. Joseph caught his look and answered it.

"It is as much as I shall want," said he very calmly, and he smiled at Hodges as he spoke, a sweet and tender but dogged smile; a smile to live in a man's memory for years.

The door was closed with a loud snap, and Josephs was left to face the long night (it was now seven o'clock) in his wet clothes, which smoked with the warmth his late bed had begun to cherish; but they soon ceased to smoke as the boy froze.

Night advanced. Josephs walked about his little cell, his teeth chattering, then flung himself like a dead log on the floor, and finding Hawes's spirit in the cold, hard stone, rose and crawled shivering to and fro again.

Meantime we were all in our nice soft beds; such as found three blankets too little added a dressing-gown of flannel, or print lined with wadding or fleecy hosiery, and so made shift. In particular all those who had the care of Josephs took care to lie warm and soft. Hawes, Jones, Hodges, Fry, Justices Shallow and Woodcock, all took the care of their own carcasses they did not take of Josephs' youthful frame.

"Be cold at night? Not if we know it; why you can't sleep if you are not thoroughly warm!!"

CHAPTER XIX.

MIDNIGHT!

Josephs was crouched shivering under the door of his cell, listening.

"All right now. I think they are all asleep; now is the time."

Hawes, Hodges, Jones, Fry, were snoring without a thought of him they had left to pass the live-long night, clothed in a sponge, cradled on a stone.

DORMEZ, MESSIEURS! TOUT EST TRANQUILLE; DORMEZ!

CHAPTER XX.

PAST one o'clock!

The moon was up, but often obscured; clouds drifted swiftly across her face; it was a cold morning — past one o'clock. Josephs was at his window standing tiptoe on his stool. Thoughts coursed one another across his broken heart as fast as the clouds flew past the moon's face: but whatever their nature, the sting was now out of them. The bitter sense of wrong and cruelty was there, but blunted. Fear was nearly extinct, for hope was dead.

There was no tumult in his mind now; he had gone through all that, and had got a step beyond grief or pain.

Thus ran his thoughts: "I wonder what Hawes was going to do with me to-morrow. Something worse than all I have gone through," he said. "That seems hard to believe. But I don't know. Best not give him the chance. He does know how to torture one. Well, he must keep it for some other poor fellow. I hope it won't be Robinson. I'll have a look at out a doors first. Ah! there is the moon. I wonder does she see what is done here: and there is the sky; it is a beautiful place. Who would stay here under Hawes if they could get up there. God lives up there! I am almost afraid he won't let a poor wicked boy like me come where he is. And they say this is a sin too: he will be angry with me — but I couldn't help it. I shall tell him what I went through first, and perhaps he will forgive me. His reverence told me he takes the part of those that are ill-used. It will be a good job for me if 't is so. Perhaps he will serve Hawes out for this instead of me: I think I should if I was

him. I know he can't be so cruel as Hawes; that is my only chance, and I'm going to take it.

"Some folk live to eighty; I am only fifteen; that is a long odds. I dare say it is five times as long as fifteen. It is hard — but I can't help it. Hawes wouldn't let me live to be a man; he is stronger than I am. Will it be a long job, I wonder. Some say it hurts a good deal; some think not. I shall soon know — but I shall never tell. That doesn't trouble me, it is only throttling when all is done; and ain't I throttled every day of my life? Shouldn't I be throttled to-morrow if I was such a spoon as to see to-morrow. I mustn't waste much more time or my hands will be crippled with cold, and then I shan't be able to.

"Mr. Evans will be sorry: — I can't help it. Bless him for being so good to me; and bless Mr. Eden; I hope he will get better, I do. My handkerchief is old, I hope it won't break; oh, no! there is no fear of that. I don't weigh half what I did when I came here.

"My mother will fret — but I can't help it. Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear! I hope some one will tell her what I went through first; and then she will say 'better so than for my body to be abused worse than a dog every day of my life.' I can't help it! and I should be dead any way before the fourteen days were out.

"Now is as good a time as any other; no one is stirring, no. Please forgive me mother. — I couldn't help it. Please forgive me God Almighty, if you care what a poor boy like me does or is done to — I couldn't help it."

* * * * * *

IL EST DEUX HEURES; TOUT EST TRANQUILLE; DORMEZ MAÎTRES, DORMEZ!

CHAPTER XXI.

IT was a bright morning. The world awoke. The working Englishman, dead drunk at the public-house over-night, had got rid of two-thirds of his burning poison by help of man's

chief nurse, sleep; and now he must work off the rest, grumbling at this the kind severity of his lot. Warm men, respectable men, amongst whom justices of the peace and other voluptuous disciplinarians, were tempted out of delicious beds by the fragrant berry, the balmy leaf, snowy damask, fire glowing behind polished bars — in short, by multifarious comfort set in a frame of gold. They came down.

"How did you sleep, dear sir?"

"Pretty well" said one with a doubtful air.

"Scarce closed my eyes all night" snarled anotner.

Another had been awoke by the barking of a dog, and it was full half an hour before he could lose the sense of luxurious ease in unconsciousness again. He made an incident of this, and looked round the table for sympathy, and obtained it, especially from such as were toadies.

Now all these had slept as much as nature required. No. 1, ar hyd y nos — *παννυχιον* — like a top. No. 2, eight hours out of the nine. The ninth his sufferings had been moderate; they had been confined to this — a bitter sense of two things; first, that he was lying floating in a sea of comforts; secondly, that the moment he should really need sleep, sleep was at his service.

In — Gaol, governor, turnkeys, chaplain, having had something to do the day before, slept among Class 1, and now turned out of their warm beds as they had turned into them, without a shade of anxiety or even recollection of him whom they had left last evening at eight to pass the livelong night in a sponge — upon a stone.

Up rose refreshed with sleep that zealous officer Hawes. He was in the prison at daybreak, and circulated with inspecting eye all through it. Went into the kitchen — saw the gruel making — docked Josephs and three more of half their allowance; then into the corridors, where on one of the snowy walls he found a speck; swore; had it instantly removed. Thence into the labor-yard, and prepared a crank for an athletic prisoner by secretly introducing a weight, and so making the poor crank a story-teller, and the prologue to punishment. Returning

to the body of the prison he called out "prisoners on the list for hard labor to be taken to the yard."

He was not answered with the usual alacrity, and looked up to repeat his summons, when he observed a cell open and two turnkeys standing in earnest conversation at the door. He mounted the stairs in great heat.

"What are you all humbugging there for, and why does not that young rascal turn out to work? I'll physic him, — him!"

The turnkeys looked in their chief's face with a strange expression of stupid wonder. Hawes caught this — his wrath rose higher.

"What d'ye stand staring at me like stuck pigs for? Come out, No. 15. — you all! why don't you bring him out to the crank?"

Hodges answered gloomily from the cell, "Come and bring him yourself, if you can."

At such an address from a turnkey, Hawes, who had now mounted the last stair, gave a snort of surprise and wrath — then darted into the cell threatening the most horrible vengeance on the bones and body of poor Josephs, threats which he confirmed with a tremendous oath. But to that oath succeeded a sudden dead stupid staring silence; for running fiercely into the cell with rage in his face, threats and curses on his tongue, he had almost stumbled over a corpse.

It lay in the middle of the cell — stark and cold, but peaceful. Hawes stood over it. If he had not stopped short his foot would have been upon it. His mouth opened but no sound came. He stood paralyzed. A greater than he was in that cell, and he was dumb. He looked up — Hodges and Fry were standing silent looking down on the body. Fry was grave: Hodges trembled. Part of a handkerchief fluttered from the bar of the window. A knife had severed it. The other fragment lay on the floor near the body where Hodges had dropped it. Hawes took this in at a glance, and comprehended it all. This was not the first or second prisoner that had escaped him by a similar road. For a moment his blood froze in him. He wished to heaven he had not been so severe upon the poor boy.

It was but for a moment. The next he steeled himself in the tremendous egotism that belongs to and makes the deliberate manslayer.

"The young viper has done this to spite me" said he. And he actually cast a look of petulant anger down.

At this precise point the minds that had borne his company so long began to part from it. Fry looked in his face with an expression bordering on open contempt, and Hodges shoved rudely by him and left the cell.

Hodges leaned over the corridor in silence. One of the inferior turnkeys asked him a question dictated by curiosity about the situation in which he had found the body. "Don't speak to me!" was the fierce wild answer. And he looked with a stupid wild stare over the railings.

So wild and white and stricken was this man's face that Evans, who was exchanging some words with a gentleman on the basement floor, happening to catch sight of it, interrupted himself and hallooed from below, "What is there anything the matter Hodges?" Hodges made no reply. The man seemed to have lost his speech for some time past.

"Let us go and see," said the gentleman; and he ascended the steps somewhat feebly, accompanied by Evans.

"What is it Hodges?"

"What is it," answered the man impatiently. "Go in there and you will see what it is!"

"I don't like this, sir," said Evans. "Oh! I am fearful there is something unfortunate has happened. You mustn't come in sir. You stay here, and I'll go in and see." He entered the cell.

Meantime a short conference had passed between Hawes and Fry.

"This is a bad business, Fry."

"And no mistake."

"Had you any idea of this?"

"No! can't say I had."

"If the parson ever gets well he will make this a handle to ruin you and me."

"Me sir! I only obey orders."

"That won't save you. If they get the better of me you will suffer along with me."

"I shouldn't wonder. I told you you were carrying it too far, but you wouldn't listen to me."

"I was wrong Fry. I ought to have listened to you, for you are the only one that is faithful to me in the gaol."

"I know my duty sir, and I try to do it."

"What are we to do with him Fry?"

"Well I don't think he ought to lie on the floor. I'd let him have his bed now I think."

"You are right. I'll send for it. Ah! here is Evans. Go for No. 15's bed."

Evans standing at the door had caught but a glimpse of the object that lay on the floor, but that glimpse was enough. He went out and said to Hodges, "Wasn't it you that took Josephs' bed away last night?" The man cowered under the question. "Well you are to go and fetch it back, the governor says." Hodges went away for it without a word. Evans returned to the cell. He came and kneeled down by Josephs and laid his hand upon him. "I feared it! I feared it!" said he. "Why he has been dead a long time. Ah! your reverence, why did you come in when I told you not. Poor Josephs is no more sir."

Mr. Eden, who had already saluted Mr. Hawes with grave politeness, though without any affectation of good will, came slowly up, and sinking his voice to a whisper in presence of death said in pitiful accents, "Poor child! he was always sickly. Six weeks ago I feared we should lose him, but he seemed to get better." He was now kneeling beside him. "Was he long ill sir?" asked he of Hawes. "Probably he was, for he is much wasted. I can feel all his bones." Hardened as they were Hawes and Fry looked at one another in some confusion. Presently Mr. Eden started back. "Why what is this? he is wet. He is wet from head to foot. What is the cause of this? Can you tell me, Mr. Hawes?"

Mr. Hawes did not answer, but Evans did.

"I am afraid it is the bucket, your reverence. They soused him in the yard late last night."

"Did they?" said Mr. Eden, looking the men full in the face. "Then they have the more to repent of this morning. But stay. Why then he was not under the doctor's hands Evans?"

"La! bless you, no. He was harder worked and worse fed than any man in the gaol."

"At work last night! Then at what hour did he die? He is stiff and cold. This is a very sudden death. Did any one see this boy die?"

The men gave no answer, but the last words — "Did any one see this boy die?" seemed to give Evans a new light.

"No!" he cried. "No one saw him die. Look here sir. See what is dangling from the window — his handkerchief."

"And this mark round his throat, Evans. He has destroyed himself." And Mr. Eden recoiled from the corpse.

"Oh! you may forgive him sir," said Evans. "We should all have done the same. No human creature could live the life they led him. Who could live upon bread and water and punishment? It is a sorrowful sight, but it is a happy release for him. Eh! poor lad," said Evans laying his hand upon the body; "I liked thee well, but I am glad thou art gone. Thou hast escaped away from worse trouble."

"Come, it is no use snivelling, Evans," put in Hawes. "I am as sorry for this job as you are. But who would have thought he was so determined? He gave us no warning."

"Don't you believe that sir," cried Evans to Mr. Eden. "He gave them plenty of warning. I heard him with my own ears tell you you were killing him; not a day for the last fortnight he did not tell you so Mr. Hawes."

"Well I didn't believe him you see."

"You mean you didn't care."

"Hold your tongue Evans! You are disrespectful. How dare you speak to me, you insolent dog? Hold your tongue!"

"No sir, I won't hold my tongue over this dead body."

"Be silent Evans," said Mr. Eden. "This is no place for disputes. Evans, my heart is broken. While there is life

there is hope; but here, what hope is there? Many in this place live in crime, but this one has died in crime; he of whom I had such good hopes has died in crime — died by his own hand; he has murdered his own soul; my heart is broken! — my heart is broken!" The good man's anguish was terrible.

Evans consoled him. "Don't go on so, sir! pray don't. Josephs is where none of us but you shall ever get to; he is in heaven as sure as we are upon earth. He was the best lad in the place; there wasn't a drop of gall in him; who ever heard a bad word from him? and he did not kill himself, till he found he was to die whether or no; so then he shortened his own death-struggle, and he was right."

"I don't understand you."

"I dare say not sir; but those two understand me. Oh it is no use to look black at me now, Mr. Hawes; I shall speak my mind though my head was to be cut off. I have been a coward; I thought too much of my wife and children; but I am a man now. Eh! poor lad, thou shan't be maligned now thou art dead, as well as tormented alive. Sir, — he that lies here so pale and calm, was not guilty of self-destruction. He was driven to death! — don't speak to me, sir, but look at me, and hear the truth, as it will come out the day all of us in this cell are damned, except you — and him!"

The man fell suddenly on his knees, took the dead boy's hand in his left hand, and held his right up, and in this strange attitude, which held all his hearers breathless, he poured out a terrible tale.

His boiling heart, and the touch of him, whom now too late he defended like a man, gave him simple but real eloquence, and in few words, that scalded as they fell, he told as powerfully as I have feebly by what road Josephs had been goaded to death.

He brought the dark tale down to where he left the sufferer rolled up in the one comfort left him on earth, his bed; and then turning suddenly, and leaving Josephs, he said sternly—

"And now, sir, ask the governor where is the bed I wrapped the wet boy up in, *for it isn't here.*"

"You know as much as I do!" was Hawes's sulky reply.

But at this moment Hodges came into the cell with the bed in question in his arms.

"There is his bed" cried he, "and what is the use of it now? If you had left it him last night it would be better for him and for me too," — and he flung the bed on the floor.

"Oh! it was you took it from him, was it?" said Evans.

"Well, I am here to obey orders, Jack Evans; do you do nothing but what you like in this place?"

"Let there be no disputing in presence of death!"

"No, sir."

"One thing only is worth knowing or thinking of now; whether there is hope for this our brother in that world to which he has passed all unprepared. Hodges, you saw him last alive!"

Hodges groaned. "I saw him last at night, and first in the morning."

"I entreat you to remember all that passed at night between you!"

"Then cover up his face — it draws my eyes to it."

Mr. Eden covered the dead face gently with his handkerchief.

Mr. Hawes met me in the corridor and sent me to take away his bed. I found him dozing, and I took — I did what I was ordered."

Mr. Eden sighed.

"Tell me what *he* said and did."

"Well sir! when I showed him the order, 'fourteen days without bed and gas,' he bursts out a laughing —"

"Good heavens!"

"And says he 'I don't say for gas, but you tell Mr. Hawes I shan't be without bed nothing nigh so long as that.'"

Mr. Eden and Evans exchanged a meaning glance; so did Fry and Hawes.

"Then I said 'No! I shan't tell Mr. Hawes anything to make him punish you any more, because you are punished too much as it is' says I —"

"I am glad you said that. But tell me what *he* said. Did he complain? did he use angry or bitter words? — you make me drag it out of you."

"No! he didn't! He wasn't one of that sort! The next thing was, he asked me to give him my hand. Well, I was surprised like at his asking for my hand, and I doing him such an ill-turn. So then he said, 'Mr. Hodges,' says he, 'why not? I never took away your bed from under you, so you can give me your hand, if I can give you mine.'"

"Oh! what a beautiful nature! Ah! these are golden words. I hope for the credit of human nature you gave him your hand?"

"Why, of course I did, sir. I had no malice; it was ignorance, and owing to being so used to obey the governor."

Here Mr. Hawes, who had remained quiet all this time, now absorbed in his own reflections, now listening sullenly to these strange scenes in which the dead boy seemed for a time to have eclipsed his importance, burst angrily in,

"I have listened patiently to you Mr. Eden, to see how far you would go; but I see if I wait till you leave off undermining me with my servants, I may wait a long while."

Mr. Eden turned round impatiently.

"You! who thinks of you or such as you in presence of such a question as lies here. I am trying to learn the fate of this immortal soul; and I did not see you — or think of you — or notice you were here."

"That is polite! Well sir, the governor is somebody in most gaols, but it seems he is to be nobody here so long as you are in it, and that won't be long. Come Fry, we have other duties to attend to." So saying he and his lieutenant went out of the cell.

Hodges went too, but not with them.

The moment they were gone — "Well sir," burst out Evans, "don t you see that the real murderer is not that stupid ignorant owl Hodges?" —

"Hush! Evans! this is no time or place for unkindly

thoughts; thank heaven that you are free from their guilt, and leave me alone with him."

He was left alone with the dead.

Evans looked through the peep-hole of the cell an hour later. He was still on his knees fearing, hoping, vowing, and above all praying — beside the dead.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. EDEN when he reappeared in the prison was sallow and his limbs feeble, but his fatal disease was baffled, and a few words are due to explain how this happened. The Malvern doctor came back with Susan within twenty hours of her departure. She ushered him into Mr. Eden's room with blushing joy and pride.

The friends shook hands, Mr. Eden thanked him for coming, and the doctor cut him short by demanding an accurate history of his disorder, and the remedies that had been applied. Mr. Eden related the rise and progress of his complaint, and meantime the doctor solved the other query by smelling a battalion of empty phials.

"The old story" said he with a cheerful grin. "You were weak — therefore they give you things to weaken you. You could not put so much nourishment as usual into your body — therefore they have been taking strength out. Lastly, the coats of your stomach were irritated by your disorder — so they have raked it like blazes. This is the mill-round of the old medicine; from irritation to inflammation, from inflammation to mortification, and decease of the patient. Now instead of irritating the irritated spot, suppose we try a little counter irritation."

"With all my heart."

The doctor then wetted a towel with cold water, wrung it half dry, and applied it to Mr. Eden's stomach.

This experiment he repeated four times with a fresh towel at intervals of twenty minutes. He had his bed made in Mr. Eden's room.

"Tell me if you feel feverish."

Towards morning Mr. Eden tossed and turned, and the doctor rising found him dry and hot and feverish. Then he wetted two towels, took the sheets off his own bed, and placed one wet towel on a blanket; then he made his patient strip naked, and lie down on his towel, which reached from the nape of his neck to his loins.

"Ah!" — cried Mr. Eden — "horrible!"

Then he put the other towel over him in front.

"Ugh! That is worse; you are a bold man with your remedies. I shiver to the bone."

"You won't shiver long."

He laid hold of one edge of the blanket and pulled it over him with a strong quick pull, and tucked it under him. The same with the other side; and now Mr. Eden was in a blanket prison — a regular strait waistcoat — his arms pinned to his sides. Two more blankets were placed loosely over him.

"Mighty fine, doctor; but suppose a fly or a gnat should settle on my face?"

"Call me and I'll take him off."

In about three quarters of an hour Dr. Gulson came to his bed-side again.

"How are you now?"

"In Elysium."

"Are you shivering?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"Are you hot?"

"Nothing of the sort. I am Elysian. Please retreat. Let no mere mortals approach. Come not near our fairy king," murmured the sick man. "I am Oberon, slumbering on tepid roses in the garden whence I take my name," purred our divine, mixing a creed or two.

"Well you must come out of this paradise for the present."

"You wouldn't be such a monster as to propose it."

Spite of his remonstrances he was unpacked, rubbed dry, and returned to his own bed where he slept placidly 'till nine

o'clock. The next day fresh applications of wet cloths to the stomach, and in the evening one of the doctor's myrmidons arrived from Malvern. The doctor gave him full and particular instructions.

The next morning Mr. Eden was packed again. He delighted in the operation, but remonstrated against the term.

"Packed!" said he to them; "is that the way to speak of a Paradisiacal process under which fever and sorrow fly and calm complacency steals over mind and body?"

A slight diminution of all the unfavorable symptoms, and a great increase of appetite relieved the doctor's anxiety so far that he left him under White's charge. So was the myrmidon called.

"Do not alter your diet — it is simple and mucilaginous — but increase the quantity by degrees."

He postponed his departure till midnight.

Up to the present time he had made rather light of the case, and as for danger he had pooh-poohed it with good-humored contempt. Just before he went he said,

"Well Frank I don't mind telling you now that I am very glad you sent for me, and I'll tell you why. — Forty-eight hours more of irritating medicines, and no human skill could have saved your life."

"Ah! my dear friend, you are my good angel — you can have no conception how valuable my life is."

"Oh yes I can!"

"And you have saved that life. Yes! I am weak still, but I feel I shall live. You have cured me."

"In popular language I have: but between ourselves nobody ever cures anybody. Nature cures all that are cured. But I patted Nature on the back; the others hit her over the head with bludgeons and brick-bats."

"And now you are going. I must not keep you or I shall compromise other lives. Well go and fulfil your mission. But first think — is there any thing I can do in part return for such a thing as this, old friend?"

"Only one that I can think of. Out-live me, old friend."

A warm and tender grasp of the hand on this, and the Malvern doctor jumped into a fly, and the railway soon whirled him into Worcestershire.

His myrmidon remained behind and carried out his chief's orders with inflexible severity, unsoftened by blandishments, unshaken by threats.

In concert with Susan he closed the door upon all harassing communications.

One day Evans came to tell the invalid how the prisoners were maltreated. Susan received him, wormed from him his errand, and told him Mr. Eden was too ill to see him, which was what my French brethren call une sainte mensonge — I a fib.

A slow but steady cure was effected by these means: applications of water in various ways to the skin, simple diet, and quiet. A great appetite soon came; he ate twice as much as he had before the new treatment, and would have eaten twice as much as he did, but the myrmidon would not let him. Whenever he was feverish the myrmidon packed him, and in half an hour the fever was gone. His cheeks began to fill, his eyes to clear and brighten, only his limbs could not immediately recover their strength.

As he recovered, his anxiety to be back among his prisoners increased daily, but neither Susan nor the myrmidon would hear of it. They acted in concert, and stuck at nothing to cure their patient. They assured him all was going on well in the prison. They meant well; but for all that, every lie, great or small, is the brink of a precipice the depth of which nothing but Omniscience can fathom.

He believed them, yet he was uneasy: and this uneasiness increased with his returning strength. At last one morning happening to awake earlier than usual, he stole a march on his nurses, and taking his stick walked out and tottered into the gaol.

He found Josephs dead under the fangs of Hawes, and the whole prison groaning.

Now the very day his symptoms became more favorable, it so happened that he had received a few lines from the Home

Office, that had perhaps aided his recovery by the hopes they inspired.

"The matter of your last communication is forwarded to the 'Inspector of Prisons.' He is instructed to inquire strictly into your statements and report to this office."

The short note concluded with an intimation that the tone in which Mr. Eden had conveyed his remonstrances was intemperate, out of place, and WITHOUT PRECEDENT.

Mr. Eden was rejoiced.

The 'Inspector of Prisons' was a salaried officer of the Crown, enlightened by a large comparison of many prisons, and, residing at a distance, was not open to the corrupting influences of association and personal sympathy with the governor, as were the county magistrates.

Day after day Mr. Eden rose in hope that day would not pass without the promised visit from the 'Inspector of Prisons.' Day after day no inspector. At last Mr. Eden wrote to him to inquire when he was coming.

The letter travelled about after him, and, after a considerable delay came his answer. It was to this effect. That he was instructed to examine into charges made against the governor of — gaol; but that he had no instructions to make an irregular visit for that purpose. His progress would bring him this year to — gaol in six weeks' time, when he should act on his instructions, but these did not justify him in varying from the routine of his circuit.

Six weeks is not long to wait for help in a matter of life and death, thought the eighty pounders, the clerks who execute England.

Three days of this six weeks had scarce elapsed, when two prisoners were driven a step each farther than their wretched fellow-sufferers who were to follow them in a week or two. Of these, one, "a mild quiet docile boy" was driven to self-slaughter; and another, one of the best-natured rogues in the place was driven to manslaughter.

This latter incident Mr. Eden prevented. I will presently relate how; it was not by postponing his interference for six weeks.

When Mr. Eden rose from his knees besides the slaughtered boy he went home at once, and wrote to the Home Secretary. On the envelope he wrote "private," and inside to this effect —

"Two months ago I informed you officially that prisoners are daily assaulted, starved, and maltreated to the danger of their lives by the governor of — gaol. I demanded of you an inquiry on the spot. In reply you evaded my demand, and proposed to refer me to the visiting justices.

"In answer I declined these men for referees on two grounds, viz. that I had lodged an appeal with a higher jurisdiction than theirs, and that they were confederates of the criminal; and to enforce the latter objection I included your proposed referees in my charges, and once more demanded of you in the Queen's name an examination of her unworthy servants on the instant and on the spot.

"On this occasion I warned you in these words —

"'Here are 180 souls, to whose correction, care, and protection the State is pledged. No one of these lives is safe a single day; and for every head that falls from this hour I hold you responsible to God and the State.'

"Surely these were no light words, yet they fell light on you.

"In answer you promised us the 'Inspector of Prisons,' but you gave him no instructions to come to us. You fooled away time when time was human life. Read once more my words of warning, and then read these —

"This morning a boy of fifteen was done to death by Mr. Hawes. Of his death you are not guiltless. You were implored to prevent it, you could have prevented it, and you did not prevent it. The victim of gaol cruelty, and of the maladministration in government offices, lies dead in his cell.

"In three days I shall commit his body to the dust; but his memory never — until he is avenged, and those who are in process of being murdered like him receive the protection of the State.

"If in the three days between this boy's murder and his burial your direct representative and agent does not come here

and examine this gaol and sift the acts of those who govern it, on the fourth day I lay the whole case before Her Majesty the Queen and the British nation, by publishing it in all the journals. Then I shall tell Her Majesty that, having thrice appealed in vain to her representatives, I am driven to appeal to herself; with this I shall print the evidence I have thrice offered you of this gaoler's felonies and their sanguinary results. That Lady has a character; one of its strong, unmistakeable features is a real, tender, active humanity.

"I read characters; it is a part of my business; and believe me, this Lady once informed of the crimes done in her name will repudiate and abhor alike her hireling's cruelty and her clerks' and secretaries' indifference to suffering and slaughter. Nor will the public hear unmoved the awful tale. Shame will be showered on all connected with these black deeds, even on those who can but be charged with conniving at them.

"To be exposed to national horror on the same column with the greatest felon in England would be a cruel position, a severe punishment for a man of honour, whose only fault perhaps is that he has mistaken an itch for eminence for a capacity for business, and so serves the State without comprehending it. But what else can I do? I too serve the State, and I comprehend what I owe it, and the dignity with which it intrusts me, and the deep responsibility it lays on me. I therefore cannot assent to future felonies any more than I have to past and present, but must stop them, and will stop them — how I can.

"So, sir, I offer you the post of honour or a place of shame. Choose! for three whole days you have the choice. Choose! and may God enlighten you and forgive me for waiting these three days.

"I have the honour to be,
"&c. &c."

To this letter, whose tone was more eccentric, more flesh and blood, and WITHOUT PRECEDENT than the last, came an answer in a different hand from the others.

"—— acknowledged receipt of the chaplain's letter.

"Since a human life has succumbed under the discipline of —— gaol, an inquiry follows immediately as a matter of course. The other inducements you have held out are comparatively weak and something more than superfluous. How far they are in good taste will be left to your own cooler consideration. A person connected with the Home Department will visit your gaol with large powers soon after you receive this.

"He is instructed to avail himself of your zeal and knowledge.

"Be pleased to follow this course. Select for him the plainer facts of your case. If on the face of the business he sees ground for deeper inquiry, a commission will sit upon the gaol, and meanwhile all suspected officers will be suspended. You will consider yourself still in direct correspondence with this office, but it is requested, on account of the mass of matter daily submitted to us, that your communications may be confined to facts, and those stated as concisely as possible."

On reading this Mr. Eden coloured with shame as well as pleasure. "How gentleman-like all this is!" thought he. "How calm and superior to me who, since I had the jaundice, am always lowering my office by getting into a heat! And I to threaten this noble, dignified creature with 'The Times.' I am thoroughly ashamed of myself. Yet what could I do? I had tried everything short of bullying and failed. But I now suspect —— never saw my two first letters. Doubtless the rotten system of our public offices is more to blame than this noble fellow."

Thus accusing himself Mr. Eden returned with somewhat feeble steps to the gaol. One of the first prisoners he visited was Thomas Robinson. He found that prisoner in the attitude of which he thought he had cured him, coiled up like a snake, moody and wretched. The man turned round with a very bad expression on his face, which soon gave way to a look of joy. He uttered a loud exclamation, and springing un-

guardedly up, dropped a brickbat which rolled towards Mr. Eden and nearly hit him. Robinson looked confused, and his eyes rose and fell from Mr. Eden's face to the brickbat.

"How do you do?"

"Not so well as before you fell ill, sir. It has been hard times with us poor fellows since we lost you."

"I fear it has."

"You have just come back in time to save a life or two. There is a boy called Josephs. I hope the day won't go over without your visiting him, for they are killing him by inches."

"How do you know that?"

"I heard him say so."

Mr. Eden groaned.

"You look pale, my poor fellow."

"I shall be better now," replied the thief, looking at him affectionately.

"What is this?"

"This, sir — what, sir?"

"This brick?"

"Well! why — it is a brick, sir!"

"Where did you get it?"

"I found it in the yard."

"What were you going to do with it?"

"Oh! I wasn't going to do any ill with it."

"Then why that guilty look when you dropped it. Come now — I am in no humour to be hard upon you. Were you going to make some more cards?"

"Now, sir, didn't I promise you I never would do that again;" and Robinson wore an aggrieved look. "Would I break a promise I made to you?"

"What was it for then?

"Am I bound to criminate myself, your reverence?"

"Certainly not to your enemy! but to your friend, and to him who has the care of your soul — yes!"

"Let me ask you a question first sir. Which is worth most, one life or twenty?"

"Twenty."

"Then if by taking one life you can save twenty, it is a good action to put that one out of the way?"

"That does not follow."

"Oh! doesn't it? I thought it did. There's a man in this prison that murders men wholesale. I thought if I could any way put it out of his power to kill any more what a good action it would be!"

"A good action! so then this brick —"

"Was for Hawes's scull, your reverence."

"This then is the fruit of all my teaching. You will break my heart amongst you."

"Don't say so, sir! pray don't say so! I won't touch a hair of his head now you are alive; but I thought you were dead or dying, so what did it matter then what I did? Besides, I was driven into a corner, I could only kill that scoundrel or let him kill me. But you are alive, and you will find some way of saving my life as well as his."

"I will try. But first abandon all thoughts of lawless revenge. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' Come, promise me."

"Now sir, is it likely I would offend you for the pleasure of dirtying my fingers with that rascal's blood. Don't let such a lump of dirt as him make mischief between you and me, sir."

"I understand! with you any unchristian sentiment is easily driven out — by another. Hatred is to give way to contempt."

"No, sir, but you are alive, and I don't think of Hawes now one way or other — with such scum as that out of sight is out of mind. When did you begin to get better, sir? and are you better? and shall I see your blessed face in my cell every day as I used?" And the water stood in the thief's eyes.

Mr. Eden smiled and sighed. "Your mind is like an eel — Heaven help the man that tries to get hold of it to do it any lasting good. You and I must have a good pray together some day."

"Ah! your reverence, that would do me good soul and body," said Mr. Supple.

"Let me now feel your pulse; it is very low. What is the matter?"

"Starvation, overwork, and solitude; I feel myself sinking."

"If I could amuse your mind."

"Even you could hardly do that, sir."

"Hum! I have brought you a quire of paper and one of Mr. Gillott's swan-quill pens and a penny inkbottle."

"What for?"

"You are to write a story."

"But I never wrote one in my life."

"Then this will be the first."

"Oh, I'll try, sir. I've tried a hundred things in my life and they none of them proved so hard as they looked. What kind of story?"

"The only kind of story that is worth a button — a true story — the story of Thomas Robinson alias Scott, alias Lyon, alias etc."

"Then you should have brought a ream instead of a quire."

"No! I want to read it when it is written. Now write the truth — do not dress or cook your facts: I shall devour them raw with twice the relish, and they will do you ten times the good. And intersperse no humbug, no sham penitence. When your own life lies thus spread out before you like a map, you will find you regret many things you have done, and view others with calmer and wiser eyes; for self-review is a healthy process. Write down these honest reflections, but don't overdo it — don't write a word you don't feel. It will amuse you while you are at it."

"That it will."

"It will interest me more than the romance of a carpet writer who never saw life, and it may do good to other prisoners."

"I want to begin."

"I know you do, creature of impulses! Let me feel your pulse again. Ah! it has gained about ten."

"Ten, your reverence. Fifty you mean. It is you for

putting life into a poor fellow and keeping him from despair. It is not the first time you have saved me. The devil hates you more than all the other parsons, for you are as ingenious in good as he is in mischief."

In the midst of this original eulogy Mr. Eden left the cell suddenly with an aching heart, for the man's words reminded him that for all his skill and zeal a boy of fifteen years lay dead of despair hard by. He went, but he left two good things behind him; occupation and hope.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE inexperienced in gaols would take for granted that the death of Josephs gave Mr. Hawes's system a fatal check. No such thing. He was staggered. So was Pharaoh staggered several times, yet he always recovered himself in twenty-four hours. Hawes did not take so long as that. A suicide was no novelty under his system. Six hours after he found his victim dead he had a man and a boy crucified in the yard, swore horribly at Fry who for the first time in his life was behind time, and tore out of his hands "Uncle Tom," which was the topic that had absorbed Fry and made him two minutes behind him; went home and wrote a note to his friend Williams informing him of the suicide that had taken place, and reflecting severely upon Josephs for his whole conduct, with which this last offence against discipline was in strict accordance. Then he had his grog, and having nothing to do he thought he would see what was that story which had prevailed so far over the stern realities of system as to derange that piece of clockwork that went by the name of Fry. He yawned over the first pages, but as the master hand unrolled the great chromatic theory, he became absorbed, and devoured this great human story till his candles burned down in their sockets and sent him to bed four hours later than usual.

The next morning soon after chapel a gentleman's servant rode up to the gaol and delivered a letter for Mr. Hawes. It

was from Justice Williams. That worthy expressed in polysyllables his sorrow at the death of Josephs after this fashion: —

"A circumstance of this kind is always to be deplored, since it gives occasion to the enemies of the system to cast reflections, which, however unphilosophical and malignant, prejudice superficial judgments against our salutary discipline."

He then went on to say that the visiting justices would be at the gaol the next day at one o'clock to make their usual report, in which Mr. Hawes might be sure his zeal and fidelity would not pass unnoticed. He concluded by saying that Mr. Hawes must on that occasion present his charges against the chaplain in a definite form, and proceedings would be taken on the spot.

"Aha! aha! So I shall get rid of him. Confound him! he makes me harder upon the beggars than I should be. Fry, put these numbers on the cranks and bring me your report after dinner."

With these words Mr. Hawes vanished, and to the infinite surprise of the turnkeys was not seen in the gaol for many hours. At two o'clock, as he was still not in the prison, Fry went to his house. He found Mr. Hawes deep in a book.

"Brought the report sir."

"Give it to me. Humph! No. 40 and 45 refractory at the crank. No. 65 caught getting up to his window; says he wanted to feel the light. 65 — that is one of the boys isn't?"

"Yes sir."

"How old is the young varmint?"

"Eleven sir."

"No. 14 heard to speak to a prisoner that was leaving the gaol, his term being out. What did he say to him?"

"Said 'Good-bye! God bless you!'"

"I'll shut his mouth. Confound the beggars! how fond they are of talking. I think they would rather go without their food than without their jaw."

"No. 19 caught writing a story. It is that fellow Robinson, one of the parson's men. I'll write something on his skin. How did he get the things to write with?"

"Chaplain gave them him."

"Ah! I am glad of that. You brought them away of course?"

"Yes sir, here they are. He made a terrible fuss about parting with them."

"What did he say?"

"He said heaven was to judge between me and him."

"Blaspheming dog! — him! I'll break him. What else?"

"'Get out of my sight' said he 'for fear I do you a mischief.' So then down he pops on his knees in a corner and turns his back on me, like an ignorant brute as he is."

"Never mind, Fry, I'll break him."

"I suppose we shall see you in the prison soon, shan't we, sir? The place looks strange to me without you."

"By-and-bye — by-and-bye. This confounded book sticks to me like a leech. How far had you got when you lent it me?"

"Got just to the most interesting part" said Fry dolefully, "where he comes under a chap called Legree; and then you took it away."

"Well, you'll have it again as soon as I have done with it. I say, what do you think of this book? is it true do you think?"

"Oh! it is true — I'd take my oath of that."

"Why how do you know?"

"Because it reads like true."

"That is no rule ye fool."

"Well sir what do you think?"

This question staggered Hawes for a moment. However he assumed an oracular look, and replied, "I think some of it is true and some isn't."

"Do you think it is true about their knocking down blackee in one lot, and his wife in another, and sending 'em a thousand miles apart?"

"Oh, that is true enough! I dare say."

"And running them down with blood-hounds?"

"Why not; they look upon the poor devils as beasts. If

you tell a Yankee a nigger is a man, he thinks you are poking fun at him."

"It is a cursed shame!"

"Of course it is! but I'll tell you what I can't swallow in this book. Hem! did you ever fall in with any Yankees?"

"One or two, sir."

"Were they green at all?"

"That they weren't. They were rather foxy I should say."

"Rather: why one of them would weather upon any three Englishmen that ever were born. Now here is a book that as good as tells me it is a Yankee custom to disable their beasts of burden. Gammon! they can't afford to do it. I believe," continued this candid personage (who had never been in any of the States), "they are the cruellest set on the face of the earth, but then they are the 'cutest (that is their own word), and they are a precious sight too 'cute to disable the beast that carries the grist to the mill."

"Doesn't seem likely — now you put it to me."

"Have a glass of grog Fry."

"Thank you sir."

"And there is the paper. Run your eye over it and don't speak to me for ten minutes, for I must see how Tom gets on under this bloody-minded heathen."

Fry read the paper; but although he moistened it with a glass of grog, he could not help casting envious glances from his folio at Mr. Hawes's duodecimo.

Fibs mixed with truth charm us more than truth mixed with fibs.

Presently an oath escaped from Mr. Hawes —

"Sir!"

"Nothing, it is only this infernal — humph!"

Presently another expletive: "I'll tell you what it is, Fry, if somebody doesn't knock this thundering Legree on the head, I'll put the book on the fire."

"Well, but if it isn't true, sir?"

"But it is true every word of it while you are reading it ye fool. What heathens there are in the world! First they sell a

child out of his mother's arms. She cuts sooner than be parted. They hunt her and come up with her; but she knows what they are, and trusts her life and the child to one of their great thundering frozen rivers as broad as the British channel sooner than fall into their hands. That is like a woman, Fry. A fig for me being drowned if the kid is drowned with me; and I don't even care so much for the kid being drowned if I go down with him — and the cowardly vermin dogs and men stood barking on the bank and durstn't follow a woman; but your cruel ones are always cowards. And now the rips have got hold of this Tom. A chap with no great harm in him that I see, except that he is a — sniveller and psalm-singer, and makes you sick at times, but he isn't lazy; and now they are mauling him because he couldn't do the work of two. A man can but do his best black or white, and it is infernal stupidity as well as cruelty to torment a fellow because he can't do more than he can do. And all this because over the same flesh and blood there is the sixteenth of an inch of skin a different colour. Wonder whether a white bear takes a black one for a hog, or a red fox takes a blue one for a badger. Well, Fry, thank your stars that you were born in Britain. There are no slaves here, and no buying and selling of human flesh; and one law for high and low, rich and poor, and justice for the weak as well as the strong."

"Yes, sir," said Fry deferentially — "are you coming into the gaol sir?"

"No," replied Hawes sturdily, "I won't move till I see what becomes of the negro, and what is done to this eternal ruffian."

"But about the prisoners in my report, sir," remonstrated Fry.

"Oh, you can see to that without my coming," replied Hawes with nonchalance. "Put 40 and 45 in the jacket four hours a-piece. Mind there's somebody by with the bucket against they sham."

"Yes sir."

"Put the boy on bread and water — and to-morrow I'll ask the justices to let me flog him. No. 14 — humph! stop his supper — and his bed — and gas."

"And Robinson?"

"Oh, give him no supper at all — and no breakfast — not even bread and water, d'ye hear. And at noon I'll put him with his empty belly in the black-hole, — that will cow him down to the ground, — there be off!"

Next morning Mr. Hawes sat down to breakfast in high spirits. This very day he was sure to humiliate his adversary, most likely get rid of him altogether.

Mr. Eden, on the contrary, wore a sombre air. Hawes noticed it, mistook it, and pointed it out to Fry. "He is down upon his luck: he knows he is coming to an end."

After breakfast Mr. Eden went into Robinson's cell: He found him haggard.

"Oh, I am glad you are come sir; they are starving me! No supper last night, no breakfast this morning, and all for — hum."

"For what?"

"Well, sir, then — having paper in my cell, and for writing — doing what you bade me — writing my life."

Mr. Eden coloured and winced. The cruelty and the personal insult combined almost took away his breath for a moment.

"Heaven grant me patience a little longer" said he aloud.

Then he ran out of the cell, and returned in less than a minute with a great hunch of bread and a slice of ham.

"Eat this" said he all fluttering with pity.

The famished man ate like a wolf; but in the middle he did stop to say,

"Did one man ever save another so often as you have me! Now my belly is full I shall have strength to stand the jacket, or whatever is to come next."

"But you are not to be tormented further than this I hope?"

"Ah, sir!" replied Robinson, "you don't know the scoundrel yet. He is not starving me for nothing. This is to weaken me till he puts the weight on that is to crush me."

"I hope you exaggerate his personal dislike to you and your own importance — we all do that."

"Well" sighed Robinson, "I hope I do. Any way now my belly is full I have got a chance with him."

The visiting justices met in the gaol. The first to arrive was Mr. Woodcock. In fact he came at eleven o'clock, an hour before the others. Had Mr. Hawes expected him so soon, he would have taken Carter down, who was the pilloried one this morning; but he was equal to the emergency. He met Mr. Woodcock with a depressed manner, as of a tender but wise father, who in punishing his offspring had punished himself, and said in a low regretful voice,

"I am sorry to say I have been compelled to punish a prisoner very severely."

"What is his offence?"

"Being refactory and breaking his crank. You will find him in the labor-yard. He was so violent, we were obliged to put him in the jacket."

"I shall see him. The labor-yard is the first place I go to."

Mr. Hawes knew that, Mr. Woodcock.

The justice found Carter in that state of pitiable torture, the sight of which made Mr. Eden very ill. He went up to him and said,

"My poor fellow, I am very sorry for you; but discipline must be maintained, and you are now suffering for fighting against it. Make your submission to the governor, and then I dare say he will shorten your punishment as far as he thinks consistent with his duty."

Carter, it may well be imagined, made no answer. It is doubtful whether the worthy magistrate expected or required one. An occasion for misjudging a self-evident case of cruelty had arrived. This worthy seized the opportunity, received an ex parte statement for Gospel, and misjudged, spite of his senses.

Item. An occasion for twaddling had come, and this good soul seized it and twaddled into a man's ear who was fainting on the rack.

At this moment the more observant Hawes saw the signs of shamming coming on. So he said hastily,

"Oh he will come to soon, and then he will be taken down;" and moved away. Mr. Woodcock followed him without one grain of suspicion or misgiving.

The English State has had many opportunities of gauging the average intellects of its unpaid jurists. By these it has profited so well, that it intrusts blindly to this gentleman and his brethren the following commission:—

They are to come into a place of darkness and mystery, a place locked up; a place which, by the folly of the nation and the shallow egotists who are its placemen and are called its statesmen, is not subject to the only safeguard of law and morals, daily inspection by the great unprejudiced public. They are to come into this the one pitch-dark hole that is now left in the land. They are to come here once in two months, and at this visit to see all that has been done there in the dark since their last visit. Their eagle eye is not to be hoodwinked by appearances got up to meet their visit. They are to come and comprehend with one piercing glance the past months as well as the present hour. Good. Only for this task is required, not the gullibility that characterises the many, but the sagacity that distinguishes the few.

Mr. Woodcock undertook not to be deceived as to what had been done in the gaol while he was forty miles distant — and Hawes gulled him under his own eyes.

What different men there are in the world, and how differently are the same things seen by them! The first crucifixion Eden saw he turned as sick as a dog — the first crucifixion Woodcock saw he twaddled in the crucified's ear, left him on the cross, and went on his way well pleased.

Hawes finding what sort of man he had to deal with, thought within himself, "Why should I compromise discipline in any point?" He said to Mr. Woodcock,

"There is another prisoner whom I am afraid I must give an hour in the dark cell."

"What has he been doing?"

"Scribbling a lot of lies upon some paper he got from the chaplain."

Mr. Hawes's brief and unkind definition of autobiography did Robinson's business. Mr. Woodcock simply observed that the proposed punishment was by no means a severe one for the offence.

They visited several cells. Woodcock addressed the prisoners in certain words, accompanied with certain tones and looks, that were at least as significant as his words, and struck the prisoners as more sincere.

The words. — "If you have anything to complain of here, now is the time to say so, and your complaint shall be sifted."

The tones and looks. — "I know you are better off here than such scum as you deserve, but you have a right to contradict me if you like; only mind, if you don't prove it to my satisfaction, who am not the man to believe anything you say, you had better have held your tongue."

Meantime Mr. Hawes said nothing, but fixed his eye on the rogue, and that eye said "One word of discontent, and the moment he is gone I massacre you." Then followed in every case the old theatrical business according to each rogue's measure of ability. They were in the Elysian fields; one thing alone saddened them; some day or other they must return to the world.

Fathers, sent by your apprehensive wives to see whether Dicky is well used at that school or not, don't draw Dicky into a corner of the playground, and with tender kisses and promises of inviolable secresy coax him to open his little heart to you, and tell you whether he is really happy: leave such folly to women — it is a weakness to wriggle into the truth as they do.

No! you go like a man into the parlour with the schoolmaster — then have Dicky in — let him see the two authorities together on good terms — then ask him whether he is happy and comfortable and well used. He will tell you he is. Go home rejoicing — but before you go into the drawing-room do pray spend twenty minutes by the kitchen fire, and then go upstairs to the boy's mother — and let her eat you, for you belong to the family of the Woodcocks.

"We are passing one cell."

"Oh! that one is empty," replied Hawes.

Not quite empty; there was a beach coffin standing in that cell, and the corpse of a murdered thief lay waiting for it.

At twelve o'clock the justices were all assembled in their room.

"We will send you a message in half an hour, Mr. Hawes."

Mr. Hawes bowed and retired, and bade Fry to take Robinson to the dark cell. The poor fellow knew resistance was useless. He came out at the word of command, despair written on his face. Of all the horrors of this hell the dark cell was the one he most dreaded. He looked up to Hawes to see if anything he could say would soften him. No! that hardened face showed neither pity nor intelligence; as well appeal to a stone statue of a mule.

At this moment Mr. Eden came into the gaol. Robinson met him on the ground-floor, and cried out to him, "Sir, they are sending me to the black hole for it. I am a doomed man; the black hole for six hours."

"No!" roared Hawes from above, "for twelve hours; the odd six is for speaking in prison."

Robinson groaned.

"I will take you out in three," said Mr. Eden, calmly.

Hawes heard and laughed aloud.

"Give me your hand on that, sir, for pity's sake," cried Robinson.

Mr. Eden gave him his hand and said, firmly, "I will take you out in two hours, please God."

Hawes chuckled: "Parson is putting his foot in it more and more. The justices shall know this."

This momentary contact with his good angel gave Robinson one little ray of hope for a companion in the cave of darkness, madness, and death.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE justices went through their business in the usual routine. They had Mr. Hawes's book up — examined the entries — received them with implicit confidence — looked for no other source of information to compare them with. Examined one witness and did not cross-examine him.

This done, one of them proposed to concoct their report at once. Another suggested that the materials were not complete; that there was a charge against the chaplain. This should be looked into, and should it prove grave, embodied in their report.

Mr. Williams over-ruled this. "We can reprimand, or if need be the bench can dismiss a chaplain without troubling the Secretaries of State. Let us make our report and then look into the chaplain's conduct, who is after all a new comer, and they say a little cracked, he is a man of learning."

So they wrote their report, and in it expressed their conviction that the system on the whole worked admirably. They noticed the incident of Josephs' suicide, but attached no significance and little importance to it. Out of a hundred and eighty prisoners there would be a few succumb in one way or another under the system, but on the whole the system worked well.

Jugger system's wheels were well greased, and so long as they were well greased it did not matter their crushing one or two. Besides the crushed were only prisoners — the refuse of society. They reported the governor Mr. Hawes as a painstaking, active, zealous officer; and now Mr. Hawes was called in — the report was read to him — and he bowed, laid his hand upon his aorta, and presented a histrionic picture of modest merit surprised by unexpected praise from a high quarter.

Next, Mr. Hawes was requested to see the report sent off to the post.

"I will, gentlemen;" and in five minutes he was at the post-office in person, and his praises on the way to his Sovereign or her representative.

"How long will the parson take us?"

"Oh! not ten minutes."

"I hope not, for I want to look at a horse."

"We had better send for him at once then."

The bell was rung and the chaplain sent for.

The chaplain was praying the prayers for the sick by the side of a dying prisoner. He sent back word how he was employed, and that he would come as soon as he had done.

This message was not well received. Keep a living justice waiting for a dying dog!

"These puppies want taking down" said Mr. Woodcock.

"Oh leave him to me," replied Mr. Williams.

Soon after this the following puppy came into the room. A gentleman of commanding figure, erect but easy, with a head of remarkable symmetry and an eye like a stag's. He entered the room quietly but rather quickly, and with an air of business; bowed rapidly to the three gentlemen in turn, and waited in silence their commands.

Then Mr. Williams drew himself up in his chair, and wore the solemn and dignified appearance that becomes a judge trying a prisoner, with this difference that his manner was not harsh or intentionally offensive, but just such as to reveal his vast superiority and irresistible weight.

In a solemn tone with a touch of pity he began thus:

"I am sorry to say Mr. Eden, that grave charges are laid against you in the prison."

"Give yourself no uneasiness on my account sir" replied Mr. Eden politely, "they are perhaps false."

"Yet they come from one who has means of knowing — from the governor Mr. Hawes."

"Ah! then they are sure to be false."

"We shall see. Four Sundays ago you preached a sermon."

"Two."

"Ay! but one was against cruelty."

"It was; the other handled theft."

"Mr. Hawes conceives himself to have been singled out and exposed by that sermon."

"Why so? there are more than thirty cruel men in this gaol besides him."

"Then this sermon was not aimed at him?" put Mr. Williams with a pinning air.

"It was and it was not. It was aimed at that class of my parishioners to which he belongs; a large class, including all the turnkeys but one, between twenty and thirty of the greater criminals among the prisoners — and Mr. Hawes."

Mr. Williams bit his lip. "Gentlemen this classification shows the animus;" then turning to Mr. Eden he said with a half-incredulous sneer, "How comes it that Mr. Hawes took this sermon all to himself?"

Mr. Eden smiled.

"How does it happen that two prisoners, 82 and 87, took it all to themselves? These two men sent for me after the sermon; they were wife-beaters. I found them both in great agitation. One terrified, the other softened to tears of penitence. These did not apply my words to Mr. Hawes. The truth is when a searching sermon is preached each sinner takes it to himself. I am glad Mr. Hawes fitted the cap on. I am glad the prisoners fitted the cap on. I am sorry Mr. Hawes was irritated instead of reformed. I am glad those two less hardened sinners were reformed instead of irritated."

"And I must tell you, sir, that we disapprove of your style of preaching altogether, and we shall do more, we shall make a change in this respect the condition of your remaining in office."

"And the bishop of the diocese?" asked Mr. Eden.

"What about him?"

"Do you think he will allow you, an ignorant inexperienced layman, to usurp the episcopal function in his diocese."

"The episcopal function? Mr. Eden."

Mr. Eden smiled.

"He does not even see that he has been trying to usurp sacred functions and of the highest order. But it is all of a piece — a profound ignorance of all law, civil or ecclesiastical, characterizes all your acts in this gaol. My good soul just ask your-

self for what purpose does a bishop exist? Why is one priest raised above other priests, and consecrated bishop, but to enable the church to govern its servants. I laugh—but I ought rather to rebuke you. What you have attempted is something worse than childish arrogance. Be warned! and touch not the sacred vessels so rashly — it is profanation."

The flashing eye and the deepening voice, and the old awful ecclesiastical superiority suddenly thundering upon them quite cowed the two smaller magistrates. Williams whose pomposity the priest had so rudely shaken gasped for breath with rage. Magisterial arrogance was not prepared for ecclesiastical arrogance, and the blow was stunning.

"Gentlemen, I wish to consult you. Be pleased to retire for a minute, sir."

A discussion took place in the chaplain's absence, Williams was for dismissing him on the spot, but the others who were cooler would not hear of it. "We have made a false move," said they, "and he saw our mistake and made the most of it. Never mind! we shall catch him on other ground."

During this discussion Mr. Eden had not been idle; he went into Robinson's empty cell, and coolly placed there another inkstand pen and quire in the place of those Hawes had removed. Then glancing at his watch he ran hastily out of the gaol. Opposite the gate he found four men waiting; they were there by appointment.

"Giles," said he to one, "I think a gentleman will come down by the next train. Go to the station and hire Jenkyns's fly with the grey horse. Let no one have it who is not coming on to the gaol. You two stay by the printing-press and loom 'till further orders. Jackson you keep in the way too. My servant will bring you your dinner at two o'clock."

He then ran back to the justices. They were waiting for him.

Mr. Williams began with a cutting coldness —

"We did not wish to go the length of laying a complaint against you before the bishop, but if you really prefer this to a friendly remonstrance —"

"I prefer the right thing to the wrong thing" was the prompt and calm rejoinder.

"The complaint shall be made."

Mr. Eden bowed, and his eyes twinkled. He pictured to himself this pompous personage writing to the Bishop of ***, to tell him that he objected to Mr. Eden's preaching; not that he had ever heard it; but that in attacking a great human vice it had hit a gaoler.

"The next I think we can deal with. Mr. Hawes complains that you constantly interfere between him and the prisoners, and undermine his authority."

"I support him in all his legal acts but I do oppose his illegal ones."

"Your whole aim is to subvert the discipline of the gaol."

"On the contrary, I assure you I am the only officer of the gaol who maintains the discipline as by law established."

"Am I to understand that you give Mr. Hawes the lie?"

"You shall phrase my contradiction according to your own taste sir."

"And which do you think is likeliest to be believed?"

"Mr. Hawes by you gentlemen; Mr. Eden by the rest of the nation."

Here Mr. Palmer put in his word.

"I don't think we ought to pay less respect to one man's bare assertion than to another's. It is a case for proof."

"Well but Palmer," replied Woodcock, "how can the gaol go on with these two at daggers drawn?"

"It cannot" said Mr. Eden.

"Ah you can see that."

"A house divided against itself!" suggested Mr. Eden.

"Well then," said Mr. Woodcock, "let us try and give a more friendly tone to this discussion."

"Why not? — our weapons would bear polishing."

"Yes: you have a high reputation Mr. Eden, both for learning and Christian feeling; in fact the general consideration in which you are held has made us more lenient in this case than we should have been with another man in your office."

"There you are all wrong."

"You can't mean that; make us some return for this feeling. You know and feel the value of peace and unity?"

"I do."

"Then be the man to restore them to this place."

"I will try."

"The governor and you cannot pull together—one must go."

"Clearly."

"Well then, no stigma shall rest on you — you will be allowed to offer us your voluntary resignation."

"Excuse me, I propose to arrive at peace and unity by another route."

"But I see no other."

"If I turn Mr. Hawes out it will come to the same thing, will it not?"

"Mr. Hawes?"

"Mr. Hawes."

"But you can't turn him out, sir," sneered Williams.

"I think I can."

"He has our confidence and our respect, and shall have our protection."

"Still I will turn him out with God's help."

"This is a defiance, Mr. Eden."

"You cannot really think me capable of defying three justices of the peace!" said Mr. Eden in a solemn tone his eyes twinkling.

"Defiance! no," said Mr. Palmer innocently.

"Well, but Palmer, his opposition to Mr. Hawes is opposition to us, and is so bitter that it leaves us no alternative: we must propose to the bench to remove you from your office."

Mr. Eden bowed.

"And meantime," put in Mr. Williams, "we shall probably suspend you this very day by our authority"

Mr. Eden bowed.

"We will not detain you any longer, sir," said Williams rather insolently.

"I will but stay to say one word to this gentleman, who has conducted himself with courtesy towards me. Sir, for your own sake do not enter on this contest with me: it is an unequal one. A boy has just been murdered in this prison. I am about to drag his murderer into the light; why hang upon his skirts, and compel me to expose you to public horror as his abettor? There is yet time to disown the foul practices of — hell!" He looked at his watch — "there is half an hour. Do not waste it in acts which our superiors will undo. See here are the prison rules; a child could understand them. A child could see that what you call 'the discipline' is a pure invention of the present gaoler, and contradicts the discipline as by law established, and consequently that Josephs and others have been murdered by this lawless man. These *are* the prison rules, are they not? and here are the gaoler's proceedings in the month of January — compare the two, and separate your honorable name from the contact of this caitiff, whose crimes will gibbet him in the nation's eyes, and you with him, unless you seize this chance and withdraw your countenance from him."

The three injustices rose by one impulse.

"Make your preparations to leave the gaol," said Mr. Woodcock.

"Half an hour is quite enough under the circumstances," said Williams.

Palmer stood aghast — his mind was not fast enough to keep up.

Mr. Eden bowed and retired.

He was scarcely out of the room when the justices drew up an order for his suspension from his office.

Mr. Hawes was next sent for.

We have found the chaplain all you described him. Discipline is impossible with such a man; here is an order for his suspension. Hawes's eyes sparkled. "We will enter it into the book, meantime you are to see it executed." Hawes went out, but presently returned.

"He won't go, gentlemen."

"What do you mean by he won't go?" said Williams.

"I told him your orders; and he said, 'Tell their worships they are exceeding their authority, and I won't go.'"

"Then I said, they give you half an hour to pack up and then you must pack off."

"He! he! he! and what did he say?"

"'Oh, they give me half an hour do they,' says he — 'you take them this' — and he wrote this on a slip of paper — here it is."

The slip contained these words —

πολλα μεταξυ πελει κυλικος και χειλεος ακρον.

While the justices were puzzling over this, Hawes added "Gentlemen, he said in his polite way, 'If it is like the prison rules and beats their comprehension, you may tell them it means —

'There is many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip.'"

"Well Mr. Hawes — what next?"

"'I am victualled for a siege,' says he, and he goes into his own room, and I heard him shoot the bolt.'

"What does that mean?" inquired Mr. Palmer.

"It means sir, that you won't get him out except by kicking him out." Hawes had been irritating their wounded vanity in order to get them up to this mark.

"Then turn him out by force," said Williams: but the other two were wiser. "No, we must not do that — we can keep him out if once he crosses the door."

"I will manage it for you, gentlemen," said Mr. Hawes.

"Do."

Mr. Hawes went out and primed Fry with a message to Mr. Eden that a gentleman had ridden over from Oxford to see him, and was at his house.

Mr. Eden was in his room busy collecting and arranging several papers: he had just tied them up in a little portfolio when he heard Fry's voice at the door. When that worthy delivered his message his lip curled with scorn. But he said "Very well. I will disappoint the sly boobies," thought he. But the

next moment, looking out of his window, he saw a fly with a grey horse coming along the road. "At last" — he cried, and instantly unbolted his door, and issued forth with his little portfolio under his arm. He had scarce taken ten steps when a turnkey popped out from a corner, and stood sentinel over his room-door barring all return.

Mr. Eden smiled and passed on along the corridor. He descended from the first floor to the basement. Here he found Hawes affecting business, but not skilfully enough to hide that he was watching Mr. Eden out.

In the yard leading to the great door he found the injustices. Aha! thought he — waiting to see me out. He raised his hat politely. Williams took no notice. The others slight.

"There is many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip,"

said he to them looking them calmly over, then sauntered towards the gate.

Mr. Hawes came creeping after and joined the injustices; every eye furtively watched the parson whom they had outwitted. Fry himself had gone to the lodge to let him out and keep him out. He was but a few steps from the door. Hawes chuckled; his heart beat with exultation. Another moment and that huge barrier would be interposed for ever between him and his enemy, the prisoners' friend.

"Open the door Mr. Fry," said the chaplain.

Fry pulled it quickly open.

"And let that gentleman in!"

A middle-aged gentleman was paying off his fly.

The door being thus thrown open he walked quickly into the gaol as if it belonged to him.

"Who is this?" inquired Mr. Williams sharply.

The new-comer inquired as sharply "The governor of this gaol?"

Mr. Hawes stepped forward: "I am the governor."

The new comer handed him his card and a note.

"Mr. Lacy from the Home Office" said Mr. Hawes to the injustices. "These, sir, are the visiting justices."

Mr. Lacy bowed, but addressed himself to Mr. Hawes only.

"Grave charges have been made against you sir. I am here to see whether matters are such as to call for a closer investigation."

"May I ask, sir, who makes the charges against me?"

"The chaplain of your own gaol."

"But he is my enemy, sir, my personal enemy."

"Don't distress yourself. No public man is safe from detraction. We hear an excellent account of you from every quarter but this one. My visit will probably turn to your advantage."

Hawes brightened.

"Is there any room in which I could conduct this inquiry?"

"Will you be pleased to come to the justices' room?"

"Yes. Let us go there at once. Gentlemen, you shall be present if you choose."

"It is right you should know the chaplain is cracked," said Mr. Williams.

"I should not wonder. Pray," inquired Mr. Lacy, "who was that bilious-looking character near the gate when I came in?"

"Why that was the chaplain."

"I thought so! I dare say we shall find he has taken a jaundiced view of things. Send for him if you please, and let us get through the business as quickly as we can."

When Mr. Eden came he found Mr. Lacy chatting pleasantly with his four adversaries. On his entrance the gentleman's countenance fell a little, and Mr. Eden had the pleasure of seeing that this man too was prejudiced against him.

"Mr. — Mr. —?"

"Eden."

"Mr. Eden, be seated if you please. You appear to be ill sir?"

"I am recovering from a mortal sickness."

"The jaundice eh?"

"Something of that nature."

"A horrible complaint."

Mr. Eden bowed.

"I have had some experience of it. Are you aware of its effect on the mind?"

"I feel its effect on the temper and the nerves."

"Deeper than that sir — it colours the judgment. Makes us look at everything on the dark side."

Mr. Eden sighed: "I see what you are driving at: but you confound effect with cause."

Mr. Lacy shrugged his shoulders, opened his portfolio, and examined a paper or two.

"Mr. Hawes, you served her Majesty in another way before you came here?"

"Five and twenty years, sir, man and boy."

"And I think with credit?"

"My will has been good to do my duty, whatever my abilities may be."

"I believe you distinguished yourself at sea in a storm in the West Indies?"

Mr. Williams put in warmly "He went out to a vessel in distress in a hurricane at Jamaica."

"It was off the Mauritius" observed Mr. Eden with a gleam of satisfaction.

"Well," said Mr. Lacy, "he saved other lives at the risk of his own, no matter where. Pray Mr. Eden, does your reading and experience lead you to believe that a brave man is ever a cruel one?"

"Yes."

"There is a proverb that the cruel are always cowards."

"Cant! seven out of twelve are cowards and five brave."

"I don't agree with you. The presumption is all on Mr. Hawes's side."

"And only the facts on mine."

Mr. Lacy smiled superciliously. "To the facts let us go then. You received a note from the Home Office this morning. In compliance with that note have you prepared your case?"

"Yes."

"Will you begin by giving me an idea what the nature of your evidence will be?"

"A page or two of print — twenty of manuscript — three or four living witnesses, and — one dead body."

"Hum! he seems in earnest, gentlemen. How long do you require to state your case? Can it be done to-day?" Mr. Lacy looked at his watch half peevishly.

"Half an-hour," was the reply.

"Only half an-hour?"

"Ay, but half an-hour neat."

"What do you mean by neat?"

"The minutes not to be counted that are wasted in idle interruptions or in arguments drawn from vague probabilities where direct evidence lies under our senses. For instance, that because I have been twenty-five years a servant of Christ with good repute, therefore it is not to be credited I could bring a false accusation; or that because Mr. Hawes was brave twenty years ago in one set of circumstances, therefore he cannot be cruel now in another set of circumstances."

Mr. Lacy coloured a little, but he took a pinch of snuff, and then coolly drew out of his pocket a long paper sealed.

"Have you any idea what this is?"

Mr. Eden caught sight of the direction; it was to himself.

"Probably my dismissal from my post?"

"It is."

Hawes quivered with exultation.

"And I have authority to present you with it if you do not justify the charges you have made against a brother officer."

"Good!" said Mr. Eden. "This is intelligent and it is just. The first gleam of either that has come into this dark hole since I have known it. I augur well from this."

"This is a character, gentlemen."

"To business, sir?" inquired Mr. Eden undoing his portfolio.

"Sir," put in Mr. Hawes, "I object to an ex parte statement from a personal enemy. You are here to conduct a candid in-

quiry, not to see the chaplain conduct a hostile one. I feel that justice is safe in your hands, but not in his."

"Stop a bit," said Mr. Eden; "I am to be dismissed unless I prove certain facts. See! the Secretary of State has put me on my defence. I will intrust that defence to no man but myself."

"You are keen, sir, but — you are in the right; and you, Mr. Hawes, will be here to correct his errors, and to make your own statement after he has done, in half an hour."

"Ah! well!" thought Hawes, "he can't do me much harm in half an hour."

"Begin, sir!" and he looked at his watch.

"Mr. Hawes, I want your book; the log-book of the prison."

"Get it, Mr. Hawes, if you please."

Mr. Hawes went out.

"Mr. Williams, are these the Prison Rules by Act of Parliament?" and he showed him the paper.

"They are, sir."

"Examine them closely, Mr. Lacy; they contain the whole discipline of this prison as by law established. Keep them before you. It is with these you will have to compare the gaoler's acts. And now, how many times is the gaoler empowered to punish any given prisoner?"

"Once! — on a second offence the prisoner, I see, is referred for punishment to the visiting justices."

"If, therefore, this gaoler has taken upon himself to punish the same prisoner twice, he has broken the law."

"At all events he has gone beyond the letter of this particular set of rules."

"But these rules were drawn up by lawyers, and are based on the law of the land. A gaoler, in the eye of the law, is merely a head turnkey set to guard the prisoners: for hundreds of years he had no lawful right to punish a prisoner at all; that right was first bestowed on him with clear limitations by an act passed in George the Fourth's reign, which I must show you, because that act is a gaoler's sole authority for punishing a prisoner at all: here is the passage, sir; will you be kind enough to read it out?"

"Hum! '*The keeper of every prison shall have power to hear all complaints touching any of the following offences: — disobedience of the prison rules, assaults by one prisoner on another where no dangerous wound is given, profane cursing or swearing, any indecent behaviour at chapel, idleness or negligence in work. The said keeper may punish all such offences by ordering any offender to close confinement in the refractory or solitary cells, and by keeping such offenders upon bread and water only for any term not exceeding three days.*'"

"Observe," put in Mr. Eden, "he can only punish once, and then not select the punishment according to his own fancy; he is restricted to separate confinement, and bread and water, and three days."

Mr. Lacy continued: "'*In case any criminal prisoner shall be guilty of any repeated offence against the rules of the prison, or any greater offence than the gaoler is by this act empowered to punish, the said gaoler shall forthwith report the same to the visiting justices, who can punish for one month, or felons or those sentenced to hard labour by personal correction.*'"

"Such, sir," said Mr. Eden, "is the law of England, and the men who laid down our prison rules were not so ignorant or unscrupulous as to run their head against the statute law of the land. Nowhere in our prison rules will you find any power given to our gaoler to punish any but minor offences, or to punish any prisoner more than once, or to inflict any variety of punishments. Such are this gaoler's powers — now for his acts and their consequences — follow me."

"Evans, open this cell. Jenkyns, what are you in prison for?"

"For running away from sarvice, your reverence."

"How often have you been punished since you came?"

"A good many times, your reverence."

"By the visiting justices?"

"No, sir! I was never punished by them, only by the governor."

"What have been your offences?"

"I don't know, sir; I never meant to offend at all, but I am

not very strong, and the governor he puts me on a heavy crank and then I can't always do the work, and I suppose he thinks it is for want of the will, and so he gives it me."

"How has he punished you?"

"Oh! sometimes it is clamming; nothing but a two-penny roll all day, and kept to hard work all the same; sometimes my bed taken away, you know, sir, but mostly the punishment jacket."

Mr. Lacy. "The punishment jacket; what is that?"

Mr. Eden. "Look in the prison rules and see if you can find a punishment jacket; meantime come with me. Two gross violations of the law — repetition of punishment and variety of punishments. Evans open this cell. What are you in for?"

Prisoner (taking off his cap politely). "Burglary, gentlemen."

"Have you been often refractory since you came here?"

"Once or twice, sir; but —"

"But what?"

"These gentlemen are the visiting justices?"

"Yes!"

"They would be offended if I told the truth."

Mr. Lacy. "I am here from the Secretary of State, and I bid you tell the truth."

Prisoner. "Oh! are you, sir; well then the truth is, I never was refractory but once."

Lacy. "Oh! you were refractory once?"

Prisoner. "Yes, sir!"

Lacy. "How came that?"

Prisoner. "Well, sir! it was the first week; I had never been in a separate cell before, and it drove me mad; no one came near me nor spoke a word to me, and I turned savage; I didn't know myself, and I broke everything in the cell."

Mr. Eden. "And the other times?"

Prisoner. "The other times, sir, I was called refractory but I was not."

Eden. "What punishments have been inflicted on you by the governor?"

Prisoner. "Well, sir! the black cell, bread and water, and none of that; took away my gas once or twice, but generally it was the punishment jacket."

Mr. Lacy. "Hum! the punishment jacket."

Mr. Eden. "How long since you had the punishment jacket?"

Prisoner. "No longer than yesterday."

Mr. Eden. "Strip, my man, and let us look at your back."

The prisoner stripped and showed his back, striped livid and red by the cutting straps.

Mr. Lacy gave a start, but the next moment he resumed his official composure, and at this juncture Mr. Hawes bustled into the cell and fixed his eye on the prisoner; "What are you doing?" said he eyeing the man.

"The gentleman made me strip, sir," said the prisoner with an ill-used air.

"Have you any complaint to make against me?"

"No, sir!"

"Then what have you been humbugging us for all this time," cried Mr. Williams contemptuously.

"For instance," cried Mr. Eden in the same tone, glancing slyly at Mr. Lacy, "how dare you show us frightful whails upon your back when you know they only exist in your imagination — and mine."

Mr. Lacy laughed. "That is true, he can't retract his whails, and I shall be glad to know how they came there." Here he made a note.

"I will show you by-and-by," said Mr. Eden.

The next two cells they went to, the prisoners assured Mr. Lacy that they were treated like Mr. Hawes's children.

"Well sir!" said Lacy, with evident satisfaction, "what do you say to that?"

"I say — use your eyes." And he wheeled the last prisoner to the light. "Look at this hollow eye and faded cheek; look at this trembling frame and feel this halting pulse. Here is a poor wretch crushed and quelled by cruelty till scarce a vestige of man is left. Look at him! here is an object to pretend to

you that he has been kindly used. Poor wretch his face gives the lie to his tongue, and my life on it his body confirms his face. Strip my lad."

Mr. Hawes interposed, and said it was cruel to make a prisoner strip to gratify curiosity.

Mr. Eden laughed. "Come strip" — said he — "the gentleman is waiting."

The prisoner reluctantly took off his coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and displayed an emaciated person and several large livid stripes on his back.

Mr. Lacy looked grave.

"Now Mr. Lacy you see the real reason why this humane gentleman did not like the prisoner to strip. Come to another. Before we go in to this one let me ask you one question: Do you think they will ever tell you the truth while Mr. Hawes's eye is on them?"

"Hum! they certainly seem to stand in awe of Mr. Hawes."

Hawes. "But, sir! you see how bitter the chaplain is against me. Where he is I ought to be if I am to have fair play."

"Certainly Mr. Hawes certainly! that is but fair."

Mr. Eden. "What are you in for?"

Prisoner. "Taking a gentleman's wipe gentlemen."

Mr. Eden. "Have you been often punished?"

Prisoner. "Yes, your reverence! Why you know I have; now didn't you save my life when they were starving me to death two months ago?"

Mr. Lacy. "How did he save your life?"

Prisoner. "Made 'em put me on the sick list, and put something into my poor belly."

Mr. Lacy. "What state was the man in Mr. Eden?"

Mr. Eden. "He was like a skeleton, and so weak that he could only speak two or three words at a time, and then had to stop a long while and recover strength to say two or three more. I did not think a human creature could be so near death and not die."

Mr. Lacy. "And did you know the cause?"

Mr. Eden. "Frankly, I did not. I had not at that time fathomed all the horrors of this place."

Mr. Lacy. "Did you tell the chaplain at the time you were starving?"

Prisoner. "No!"

Mr. Eden. "And why not?"

Mr. Hawes. "Simply because he never was starving."

Prisoner. "Well! I'll tell you, gentlemen; his reverence said to me, 'My poor fellow you are very ill — I must have you on the sick list directly,' and then he went for the doctor. Now I knew if I got on the sick list they would fill my belly; so I said to myself, best let well alone. If I had told him it was only starvation he would not interfere I thought."

Mr. Lacy opened his eyes. Mr. Eden sighed.

Mr. Lacy. "You seem to have a poor opinion of Her Majesty's officers."

Prisoner. "Didn't know him you see — didn't know his character; the humbug that was here before him would have let a poor fellow be kicked into his grave before his eyes, and not hold out a hand to save him."

Mr. Lacy. "Let me understand you — were you kept without food?"

Prisoner. "I was a day and a half without any food at all."

Mr. Lacy. "By whose orders?"

Prisoner. "By the governor's there, and I was a week on a twopenny loaf once a day, and kept at hard work on that till I dropped. Ah your reverence, I shall never forgot your face. I should be under the sod now if it was not for you."

Williams. "You rascal, the last time I was here you told me you never were so happy and comfortable."

Prisoner. "Ha! ha! ha! ha! hee! hee! haw! haw! ho! I ask your pardon for laughing sir; but you are so precious green. Why if I had told you the truth then, I shouldn't be alive to talk to you now."

"What I should have murdered you, should I" said Mr. Hawes, with a lofty sneer.

"Why you know you would sir," replied the prisoner firmly and respectfully, looking him full in the face before them all.

Mr. Lacy. "You don't think so, or you would not take these liberties with him now."

The prisoner cast a look of pity on Mr. Lacy.

"Well you *are* green — what can't you see that I am going out to-day? Do you think I'd be such a cully as to tell a pack of green-horns like you the truth before a sharp hand like our governor, if I was in his power; no, my term of imprisonment expired at twelve o'clock to-day."

"Then why are you here?"

"I'll tell you, sir, our governor always detains a prisoner for hours after the law sets him free: so then the poor fellow has not time to get back to his friends, so then he sleeps in the town, ten to one at a public-house; gets a glass, gets into bad company, and in a month or two comes back here; that is the move sir. Bless you they are so fond of us they don't like to part with us for good and all."

Mr. Lacy. "I do not for a moment believe Mr. Hawes, that you have foreseen these consequences, but the detention of this man after twelve o'clock is clearly illegal, and you must liberate him on the instant."

Mr. Hawes. "That I will, and I wish this had been pointed out to me before, but it was a custom of the prison before my time."

Mr. Eden. "Evans come this way, come in, how long have you been a turnkey here."

Evans. "Four years, sir."

Mr. Eden. "Do you happen to remember the practice of the late governor with respect to prisoners whose sentence had expired?"

Evans. "Yes sir! They were kept in their cells all the morning: then at eleven their own clothes were brought in clean and dry; and they had half an hour given them to take off the prison dress and put on their own. Then a little before twelve they were taken into the governor's own room for a word of friendly advice on leaving, or a good book, or a tract, or

what not. Then at sharp twelve the gate was opened for them and —"

Prisoner. "Good bye — till we see you again."

Evans (sternly). "Come my man, it is not for you to speak till you are spoken to."

Mr. Eden. "You must not take that tone with the gentleman Evans — this is not a queen's prisoner, it is a private guest of Mr. Hawes. But time flies. If after what we have heard and seen, you still doubt whether this gaoler has broken the law by punishing the same prisoner more than once, and in more ways than one, fresh evidence will meet you at every step, but I would now direct your principal attention to other points. Look at Rule 37. By this rule each prisoner must be visited and conversed with by four officers every day, and they are to stay with him upon the aggregate half an hour in the day. Now the object of this rule is to save the prisoners from dying under the natural and inevitable operation of solitude and enforced silence, two things that are fatal to life and reason."

"But solitary confinement is legal."

Mr. Eden sighed heavily.

"No it is not: separate confinement, *i. e.* separation of prisoner from prisoner is legal, but separation of a prisoner from the human race is as illegal as any other mode of homicide. It never was legal in England; it was legal for a short time in the United States, and do you know why it has been made illegal there?"

"No, I do not."

"Because they found that life and reason went out under it like the snuff of a candle. Men went mad and died, as men have gone mad and died here through the habitual breach of Rule 37, a rule, the aim of which is to guard separate confinement from being shuffled into solitary confinement or homicide. Take twenty cells at random, and ask the prisoners how many officers come and say good words to them as bound by law; ask them whether they get their half hour per diem of improving conversation. There is a row of shambles, go into them by yourself, take neither the head butcher nor me."

Mr. Lacy bit his lip, bowed stiffly, and beckoned Evans to accompany him into the cells. Mr. Hawes went in search of Fry, to concert what was best to be done. Mr. Eden paced the corridor. As for Mr. Lacy, he took the cells at random, skipping here and there. At last he returned and sent for Mr. Hawes.

"I am sorry to say that the 37th Rule has been habitually violated; the prisoners are unanimous; they tell me that so far from half an hour's conversation, they never have three minutes, except with the chaplain: and during his late illness they were often in perfect solitude. They tell me too that when you do look in it is only to terrify them with angry words and threats. Solitude broken only by harsh language is a very sad condition for a human creature to lie in — the law it seems does not sanction it — and our own imperfections should plead against such terrible severity applied indiscriminately to great and small offenders."

"Oh, that is well said, that is nobly said," cried Mr. Eden with enthusiasm.

"Sir! I was put in here to carry out the discipline which had been relaxed by the late governor, and I have but obeyed orders as it was my duty."

"Nonsense," retorted Mr. Eden. "The discipline of this gaol is comprised in these rules, of which eight out of ten are habitually broken by you."

"He is right there so far Mr. Hawes: you are here to maintain, not an imaginary discipline, but an existing discipline strictly defined by printed rules, and it seems clear you have committed (through ignorance) breaches of these rules: but let us hope Mr. Eden that no irreparable consequences have followed this unlucky breach of Rule 37."

"Irreparable? No!" replied Mr. Eden, bitterly. "The Home Office can call men back from the grave, can't it? Here is a list of five men all extinguished in this prison by breach of Rule 37. You start: understand me, this is but a small portion of those who have been done to death here in various ways; but these five dropped silently like autumn leaves by breach of

Rule 37. Rule 37 is one of the safety valves, which the law, more humane than the blockheads who execute it, has attached to that terrible engine separate confinement."

"I cannot accept this without evidence."

"I have a book here that contains ample evidence; you shall see it. Meantime I will just ask that turnkey about Hatchett, the first name on your list of victims. Evans, what did you find in Hatchett's cell when he was first discovered to be dying?"

"Eighteen loaves of bread, sir, on the floor in one corner."

"Eighteen loaves! I really don't understand."

"Don't you?—how could eighteen loaves have accumulated but by the man rejecting his food for several days? How could they have accumulated unobserved if Rule 37 had not been habitually broken? Alas! sir, Hatchett's story, which I see is still dark to you, is as plain as my hand to all of us who know the fatal effects of solitary or homicidal confinement. Thus sir it was: — Unsustained by rational employment, uncheered by the sound of a human voice, torn out by the roots from all healthy contact with the human race, the prisoner Hatchett's heart and brain gave way together; being now melancholy mad he shunned the food that was jerked blindly into his cell, like a bone to a wolf, by this scientific contrivance to make brute fling food to brute, instead of man handing it with a smile to grateful man; and so his body sank (his spirits and reason had succumbed before) and he died. His offence was refusing to share his wages with a woman from whom he would have been divorced, but that he was too poor to buy justice at so dear a shop as the House of Lords. The law condemned him to a short imprisonment. The gaoler on his own authority substituted capital punishment."

"Is it your pleasure, sir, that I should be vilified and insulted thus to my very face, and by my inferior officer?" asked Hawes, changing colour.

"You have nothing to apprehend except from facts," was the somewhat cold reply. "You are aware I do not share this gentleman's prejudices."

"Would you like to see a man in the act of perishing through the habitual breach of Rule 37 in — gaol?"

"Can you show me such a case?"

"Come with me."

They entered Strutt's cell. They found the old man in a state bordering on stupor. When the door was opened he gave a start but speedily relapsed into stupor.

"Now, Mr. Lacy, here is a lesson for you. Would to God I could show this sight to all the pedants of science who spend their useless lives in studying the limbs of the crustaceonidunculæ, and are content to know so little about man's glorious body; and to all the State dunces who give sordid blockheads the power to wreck the brains and bodies of wicked men in these the clandestine shambles of the nation. Would I could show these and all other numsculls in the land this dying man, that they might write this one great truth in blood on their cold hearts and muddy understandings. Alas! all great truths have to be written in blood ere man will receive them."

"But what is your great truth?" asked Mr. Lacy impatiently.

"This, sir," replied Mr. Eden putting his finger on the stupified prisoner's shoulder and keeping it there; "that the human body besides its grosser wants of food and covering has its more delicate needs, robbed of which it perishes more slowly and subtly but as surely as when frozen or starved. One of these subtle but absolute conditions of health is light. Without light the body of a blind man pines as pines a tree without light. Tell that to the impostor physical science deep in the crustaceonidunculæ and ignorant of the A B C of man. Without light man's body perishes, with insufficient light it droops; and here in all these separate shambles is insufficient light, a defect in our system which co-operates with this individual gaoler's abuse of it. Another of the body's absolute needs is work. Another is conversation with human beings. If by isolating a vulgar mind that has collected no healthy food to feed on in time of dearth you starve it to a stand-still, the body runs down like a watch that has not been wound up. Against this

law of Nature it is not only impious but idiotic to struggle. Almighty God has made man so, and so he will remain while the world lasts. A little destructive blockhead like this can knock God's work to pieces — ecce signum — but he can no more alter it while it stands, than he can mend it when he has let it down and smashed it. Feel this man's pulse and look at his eye; life is ebbing from him by a law of Nature as uniform as that which governs the tides."

"His pulse is certainly very low, and when I first felt it he was trembling all over."

"Oh, that was the agitation of his nerves — we opened the door suddenly."

"And did that make a man tremble?"

"Certainly; that is a well-known symptom of solitary confinement; it is by shattering a man's nerves all to pieces that it prepares the way for his death, which death comes sometimes in raging lunacy, of which eight men have died under Mr. Hawes's reign. Here is the list of deaths by lunacy from breach of Rule 37, eight. You will have the particulars by-and-by."

"I really don't see my way through this," said Mr. Lacy, "let us come to something tangible. What is this punishment jacket that leaves marks of personal violence on so many prisoners?"

Now Hawes had been looking for this machine to hide it, but to his surprise neither he nor Fry could find it.

"Evans, fetch the infernal machine."

"Yes, your reverence."

Evans brought the jacket straps and collar from a cell where he had hidden them by Mr. Eden's orders.

"You play the game pretty close, parson," said Mr. Hawes with an attempt at a sneer.

"I play to win: I am playing for human lives. This sir is the torture, marks of which you have seen on the prisoners; but your inexperience will not detect at a glance all the diabolical ingenuity and cruelty that lurks in this piece of linen and these strips of leather. However it works thus: — The man being in the jacket its back straps are drawn so tight that the sufferer's

breath is impeded, and his heart lungs and liver are forced into unnatural contact. You stare. I must inform you that Nature is a wonderfully close packer. Did you ever unpack a human trunk of its stomach, liver, lungs, and heart, and then try to replace them? I have; and believe me as no gentleman can pack like a shopman so no shopman can pack like Nature. The victim's body and organs being crushed, these two long straps fasten him so tight to the wall that he cannot move to ease the frightful cramps that soon attack him. Then steps in by way of climax this collar three inches and a half high. See it is as stiff as iron, and the miscreants have left the edges unbound that it may do the work of a man-saw as well as a garotte. In this iron three-handed gripe the victim writhes and sobs and moans with anguish, and worse than all loses his belief in God."

"This is a stern picture" said Mr. Lacy hanging his head.

"Until what with the freezing of the blood in a body jammed together and flattened against a wall — what with the crushed respiration and the cowed heart a deadly faintness creeps over the victim and he swoons away!"

"Oh!"

"It is a lie — a base malignant lie!" shouted Hawes.

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Hawes."

Here the justices with great heat joined in, and told Mr. Lacy he would be much to blame if he accepted any statement made against so respectable a man as Mr. Hawes. Then they all turned indignantly on Mr. Eden. That gentleman's eyes sparkled with triumph.

"I have been trying a long time to make him speak but he was too cunning. It is a lie is it?"

"Yes, it is a lie."

"What is a lie?"

"The whole thing."

"Give me your book, Mr. Hawes. What do you mean by 'the punishment-jacket,' an entry that appears so constantly here in your handwriting?"

"I never denied the jacket."

"Then what is the lie of which you have accused me? Show me — that I may ask your pardon and his I serve for so great a sin as a lie."

"It is a lie to say that the jacket tortures the prisoners and makes them faint away; it only confines them. You want to make me out a villain, but it is your own bad heart that makes you think so or say so without thinking it."

"Now Mr. Lacy I think we have caught our eel. This then is the ground you take; if it were true that this engine, instead of merely confining men, tortured them to fainting, then you say you would be a villain. You hesitate, sir; can't you afford to admit that, after all?"

"Yes, I can."

"But on the other hand you say it is untrue that this engine tortures?"

"I do."

"Prove that by going into it for one hour. I have seen you put a man in it for six."

"Now do you really think I am going to make myself a laughing-stock to the whole prison?"

"Well, but consider what a triumph you are denying yourself, to prove me a liar and yourself a true man. It would be the greatest feat of dialectics the world ever saw; and you need not stand on your dignity — better men than you have been in it, and there goes one of them. Here, Evans, come this way. We want you to go into the punishment-jacket."

The man recoiled with a ludicrous face of disgust and dismay. Mr. Lacy smiled.

"Now your reverence, don't think of it. I don't don't want to earn no more guineas that way."

"What does he mean?" asked Mr. Lacy.

"I gave him a guinea to go into it for half an hour, and he calls it a hard bargain."

"Oh, you have been in it then? Tell me, is it torture or is it only confinement?"

"Con-finement! con-found such confinement I say. Yes it

is torture and the worst of torture. Ask his reverence, he has been in the oven as well as me."

Mr. Lacy opened his eyes wide.

"What!" said he with a half-grin, "have you been in it?"

"That he has, sir," said Evans grinning out in return. "Bless you his reverence is not the one to ask a poor man to stand any pain he daren't face himself."

"There, there, we don't want to hear about his reverence," said his reverence very sharply. "Mr. Hawes says it is not torture, and therefore he won't face it. 'It is too laughable and painless for me,' says slippery Mr. Hawes. 'It *is* torture, and therefore I won't face it' says the more logical Mr. Evans. But we can cut this knot for you Mr. Lacy. There are in this dungeon a large body of men so steeped in misery, so used to torture for their daily food, that they will not be so nice as Messrs. Hawes and Evans. 'Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.' Follow me, sir; and as we go pray cast your eyes over the prison-rules, and see whether you can find 'a punishment-jacket.' No, sir, you will not find even a Spanish-collar, or a pillory, or a cross, far less a punishment-jacket which combines those several horrors."

Mr. Hawes hung back and begged a word with the justices.

"Gentlemen, you have always been good kind friends to me — give me a word of advice, or at least let me know your pleasure. Shall I resign — shall I fling my commission in this man's face who comes here to usurp your office and authority?"

"Resign! Nonsense!" said Mr. Williams. "Stand firm. We will stand by you, and who can hurt you then?"

"You are very good, sir. Without you I couldn't put up with any more of this — to be baited and badgered in my own prison, after serving my queen so many years by sea and land."

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Woodcock.

"And how can I make head against such a man as Eden — a lawyer in a parson's skin, an orator too that has a hundred words to say to my one?"

"Let him talk till he is hoarse, we will not let him hurt you."

"Thank you, gentlemen, thank you. Your wishes have always been my law. You bid me endure all this insolence; honoured by your good opinion and supported by your promise to stand by me I will endure it."

And Mr. Hawes was seen to throw off the uneasiness he had put on to bind the magistrates to his defence.

"They are coming back again."

"Who is this with them?"

Mr. Hawes muttered an oath. "It is a refactory prisoner I had sent to the dark cell. I suppose they will examine him next, and take his word against mine."

Chorus of visiting justices. "Shame!"

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Eden had taken Mr. Lacy to the dark cells. Evans, who had no key of them, was sent to fetch Fry to open them.

"We will kill two birds with one stone — disinter a patient for our leathern gallows, and a fresh incident of the — Inquisition. Open this door Mr. Fry."

The door was opened. A feeble voice uttered a quavering cry of joy that sounded like wailing, and a figure emerged so suddenly and distinctly from the blackness, that Mr. Lacy started. It was Thomas Robinson, who crept out white and shaking, with a wild haggard look. He ran to Mr. Eden like a great girl.

"Don't let me go back — don't let me go back, sir." And the cowed one could hardly help whimpering.

"Come, courage my lad," rang out Mr. Eden, "your troubles are nearly over. Feel this man's hand sir."

"How he trembles! Why, he must be chicken-hearted."

"No! only he is one of your men of action, not of passive fortitude. He is imaginative too, and suffers remorse for his crimes without the soothing comfort of penitence. Twenty-

four hours of that hole would deprive him or any such nature of the light of reason."

"Is this a mere opinion or do you propose to offer me proof?"

"Six men driven by this means alone to the lunatic asylum, of whom two died there soon after."

"Hum! of what nature is your proof? I cannot receive assertion."

"Entries made at the time by a man of unimpeachable honesty."

"Indeed!"

"Who hates me and adores Mr. Hawes."

"Very well, Mr. Eden" replied the other keenly "whatever you support by such evidence as that I will accept as fact and act upon it."

"Done!"

"Done!" and Mr. Lacy smiled good-humouredly but it must be owned incredulously. "Is that proof at hand?" he added.

"It is. But one thing at a time — the leathern gallows is the iniquity we are unearthing at present. Ah! here are Mr. Hawes and his subordinates."

"Subordinates?"

"You will see why I call them so."

Mr. Williams. "I trust you will not accept the evidence of a refractory prisoner against an honest well-tried officer, whose conduct for two years past we have watched and approved."

Mr. Lacy replied with dignity —

"Your good opinion of Mr. Hawes shall weigh in his favour at every part of the evidence, but you must not dictate to me the means by which I am to arrive at the truth."

Mr. Williams bit his lip and was red and silent.

"But your reverence" cried Robinson "don't let me be called a refractory prisoner when you know I am not."

"Then what were you in the black hole for?"

"For obeying orders."

"Nonsense! hum! Explain."

"His reverence said to me, 'You are a good writer; write your own life down. See how you like it when you look at it with reason's eye instead of passion's all spread out before you in its true colours. Tell the real facts — no false coin, nor don't put any sentiments down you don't feel to please me — I shall only despise you,' said his reverence. Well sir I am not a fool, and so of course I could see how wise his reverence was, and how much good might come to my poor sinful soul by doing his bidding; and I said a little prayer he had taught me against a self-deceiving heart — his reverence is always letting fly at self-deception — and then I sat down and I said, 'Now I won't tell a single lie or make myself a pin better or worse than I really am.' Well, gentlemen, I hadn't written two pages when Mr. Fry found me out and told the governor, and the governor had me showed into the black-hole where you found me."

"This is Mr. Fry I think?"

"My name is Fry."

"Was this prisoner sent to the black-hole merely for writing his life by the chaplain's orders?"

"You must ask the governor sir. My business is to report offences and to execute orders; I don't give 'em."

"Mr. Hawes, was he sent to the black-hole for doing what the chaplain had set him to do by way of a moral lesson?"

"He was sent for scribbling a pack of lies without my leave."

"What! when he had the permission of your superior officer."

"Of my superior officer?"

"Your superior in the department of instruction I mean. Can you doubt that he is so with these rules before you? Let me read you one of them: —

"'*Rule* 18. *All prisoners, including those sentenced to hard labour, are to have such time allowed them for instruction as the chaplain may think proper, whether such instruction withdraw them from their labour for a time or not.*'

"And again, by '*Rule* 30. *Each prisoner is to have every*

means of moral and religious instruction the chaplain shall select for each as suitable.' So that you have passed out of your own department into a higher department, which was a breach of discipline, and you have affronted the head of that department and strained your authority to undermine his, and this in the face of Rule 18, which establishes this principle: that should the severities of the prison claim a prisoner by your mouth, and religious or moral instruction claim him by the chaplain's, your department must give way to the higher department."

"This is very new to me, sir; but if it is the law —"

"Why, you see it is the law, printed for your guidance. I undo your act Mr. Hawes; the prisoner Robinson will obey the chaplain in all things that relate to religious or moral instruction, and he will write his life as ordered, and he is not to be put to hard labour for twenty-four hours. By this means he will recover his spirits and the time and moral improvement you have made him lose. You hear, sir?" added he very sharply.

"I hear" said Hawes sulkily.

"Go on with your evidence Mr. Eden."

"Robinson my man you see that machine?"

"Ugh! yes I see it."

"For two months I have been trying to convince Mr. Hawes that engine is illegal. I failed; but I have been more fortunate with this gentleman who comes from the Home Office. He has not taken as many minutes to see it is unlawful."

"Stop a bit, Mr. Eden. It is clearly illegal, but the torture is not proved."

"Nor ever will be" put in Mr. Hawes.

"So then, Robinson, no man on earth has the right to put you into that machine."

"Hurrah!"

"It is therefore as a favour that I ask you to go into it to show its operation."

"A favour, your reverence, to you? I am ready in a minute."

Robinson was jammed, throttled, and nailed in the man-

press. Mr. Lacy stood in front of him and eyed him keenly and gravely.

"They seem very fond of you these fellows."

"Can you give your eyes to that sight and your ears to me?" asked Mr. Eden.

"I can."

"Then I introduce to you a new character — Mr. Fry. Mr. Fry is a real character, unlike those of romance and melodrama, which are apt to be either a streak of black paint, or else a streak of white paint. Mr. Fry is variegated. He is a moral magpie; he is, if possible, as devoid of humanity as his chief; but to balance this defect, he possesses, all to himself, a quality, a very high quality, called Honesty."

"Well, that is a high quality and none too common."

"He is one of those men to whom veracity is natural. He would hardly know how to tell a falsehood. They fly about him in this place like hailstones, but I never saw one come from him."

"Stay! does he side with you or with Mr. Hawes in this unfortunate difference?"

"With me!" cried Mr. Hawes eagerly.

Mr. Eden bowed assent.

"Hum!"

"This honest Nero is zealous according to his light; he has kept a strict record of the acts and events of the gaol for four years past; *i. e.*, rather more than two years of Captain O'Connor's gaolership, and somewhat less than two years of the present gaoler. Such a journal, rigorously kept out of pure love of truth by such a man, is invaluable. There no facts are likely to be suppressed or coloured, since the record was never intended for any eye but his own. I am sure Mr. Fry will gratify you with a sight of this journal. Oblige me Mr. Fry!"

"Certainly sir! certainly!" replied Fry swelling with importance and gratified surprise.

"Bring it me at once, if you please."

Fry went with alacrity for his journal.

"Mr. Lacy" said Mr. Eden with a slight touch of reproach

"you can read not faces only but complexions. You read in my yellow face and sunken eye — prejudice; what do you read here?" and he wheeled like lightning and pointed to Mr. Hawes, whose face and very lips were then seen to be the colour of ashes.

The poor wretch tried to recover composure, and retort defiance; but the effort came too late: his face had been seen, and once seen that look of terror anguish and hatred was never to be forgotten.

"What is the matter, Mr. Hawes?"

"W — W — When I think of my long services, and the satisfaction I have given to my superiors — and now my turnkey's journal to be taken and believed against mine."

(*Chorus of Justices*). "It is a shame!"

Mr. Eden (very sharply). "Against yours? what makes him think it will be against his? The man is his admirer, and an honest man. What injustice has he to dread from such a source?"

Mr. Lacy. "I really cannot understand your objection to a man's evidence whose bias lies your way; and I must say, it speaks well for Mr. Eden that he has proposed this man in evidence."

At this juncture, the magistrates, after a short consultation, informed Mr. Lacy that they had business of more importance to transact, and could give no more time to what appeared to them an idle and useless inquiry.

"At all events, gentlemen," replied Mr. Lacy "I trust you will not leave the gaol. I am not here to judge Mr. Hawes, but to see whether Mr. Eden's demand for a formal inquiry into his acts ought to be granted or refused. Now unless the evidence takes some new turn I incline to think I must favour the inquiry; that is to say, should the chaplain persist in demanding it."

"Which I shall."

"Should a royal commission be appointed to sit here, I should naturally wish to consult you as to the component members of the commission; and it is my wish to pay you the

compliment usual in such cases of selecting one of the three commissioners from your body. But one question gentlemen before you go. Have you complied with No. 1 of these your rules? Have you visited every prisoner in his or her cell once a month?"

"Certainly not!"

"I am sorry to hear it. Of course at each visit you have closely examined this the gaoler's book, a record of his acts and the events of the gaol?"

"Portions of it are read to us; this is a form which I believe is never omitted, — is it Mr. Hawes?"

"Never, gentlemen!"

"'Portions!' and 'a form!' what then are your acts of supervision? Do you examine the turnkeys, and compare their opinions with the gaoler's?"

"We would not be guilty of such ungentlemanly behaviour!" replied Mr. Williams, who had been longing for some time to give Mr. Lacy a slap.

"Do you examine the prisoners apart, so that there can be no intimidation of them?"

"We always take Mr. Hawes into the cells with us."

"Why do you do that? pray!"

"We conceive that nothing would be gained by encouraging the refuse of mankind to make frivolous complaints against their best friend."

Here the speaker and his mates wore a marked air of self-satisfaction.

"Well, sir! has the present examination in no degree shaken your confidence in Mr. Hawes's discretion?"

"Not in the least."

"Nor in your own mode of scrutinizing his acts?"

"Not in the least."

"That is enough! — gentlemen, I need detain you no longer from the business you have described as more important than this!"

Mr. Lacy shrugged his shoulders. Mr. Eden smiled to him, and said quietly —

"As they were in the days of Shakespeare so they were in the days of Fielding; as they were in the days of Fielding so they are in the days of light; and as they are now so will they remain until they are swept away from the face of the soil. (Keep your eye on Mr. Hawes, edging away there so adroitly.) It is not their fault, it is their nature; their constitution is rotten; in building them the State ignored Nature, as Hawes ignores her in his self-invented discipline."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"That no *body* of men ever gave for nothing anything worth anything, nor ever will. Now knowledge of law is worth something; zeal, independent judgment, honesty, humanity, diligence, are worth something (are you watching Mr. Hawes, sir?); yet the State, greedy goose, hopes to get them out of a body of men for nothing!"

"Hum! Why has Mr. Hawes retired?"

"You know as well as I do."

"Oh! do I?"

"Yes, sir! the man's terror when Fry's journal was proposed in evidence, and his manner of edging away obliquely to the direction Fry took, were not lost on a man of your intelligence."

"If you think that, why did you not stop him till Fry came back with the book?"

"I had my reasons; meantime we are not at a stand-still. Here is an attested copy of the journal in question; and here is Mr. Hawes's log-book. Fry's book intended for no mortal eye but his own; Hawes's concocted for inspection."

"I see a number of projecting marks pasted into Fry's journal!"

"Yes, sir; on some of these marks are written the names of remarkable victims recurring at intervals; on others are inscribed the heads of villainy, — 'the black-hole,' 'starvation,' 'thirst,' 'privation of exercise,' 'of bed,' 'of gas,' 'of chapel,' 'of human converse,' 'inhuman threats,' and the infernal torture called the 'punishment-jacket.' Somewhat on the plan of 'Watt's Bibliotheca Britannica.' So that you can at will trace any one of Mr. Hawes's illegal punishments, and see it running

like a river of blood through many hapless names; or you can, if you like it better, track a fellow-creature dripping blood from punishment to punishment from one dark page to another, till release, lunacy, or death closes the list of his recorded sufferings."

Aided by Mr. Eden, who whirled over the leaves of Mr. Hawes's log-book for him, Mr. Lacy compared several pages of the two books. The following is merely a selected specimen of the entries that met his eye: —

Mr. Fry.	Mr. Hawes.
Joram: Writing on his can — bread and water.	*Joram:* Refractory — bread and water.
Joram: Bread and water.	
Joram: Bread and water.	*Joram:* Refractory — crank; bread and water.
Joram: Crank not performed — bread and water.	
Joram: Punishment-jacket.	
Joram:: Refractory — crank — bread and water.	*Joram:* Refractory — bread and water.
Joram: Attempted suicide; insensible when found; had cut off pieces of his hair to send to his friends — sick list.	*Joram:* Feigned suicide; cause, religious despondency — put on sick-list.
Josephs: Crank not performed; says he could not turn the crank No. 9; punishment-jacket.	*Josephs:* Refractory; said he would not work on crank 9; punishment-jacket.
Tomson: Communicating in chapel — dark cell 12 hours.	*Tomson:* Communicating — dark cells.
Tomson: Bread and water.	
Tomson: Crank not performed; punishment-jacket.	*Tomson:* Refractory — jacket.
Tomson: Dark cells.	
Tomson: No chapel.	
Tomson: Dark cells.	
Tomson: Melancholy.	*Tomson:* Afflicted with remorse for past crimes — surgeon.

Mr. Fry.	Mr. Hawes.
Tomson: Very strange. *Tomson:* Removed to lunatic asylum.	*Tomson:* Removed to asylum.
Tanner: (9 years old) Caught up at window; asked what he did there; said he wanted to feel the light — jacket, and bread and water three days.	*Tanner:* Caught up at window; answered insolently — jacket.
Tanner: For repining — chapel and gas stopped until content.	*Tanner:* Refractory language — forbidden chapel until reformation.

"Can I see such a thing as a prisoner who has attempted suicide?" inquired he with lingering incredulity.

"Yes! there are three on this landing. Come first to Joram, of whom Mr. Hawes writes that he made a sham attempt on his life in a fit of religious despondency — Mr. Fry, that having been jacketed, and put on bread and water for several days, he became depressed in spirits, and made a real attempt on his life. Ah! here is Mr. Fry, he is coming this way to tell you his first falsehood. Hawes has been all this while persuading him to it."

"Where is your journal Mr. Fry?"

"Well, sir," replied Fry hanging his head, "I can't show it you. I lent it to a friend now I remember, and he has taken it out of the gaol; but" added he with a sense of relief, "you can ask me any questions you like and I 'll answer them all one as my book."

"Well then was Joram's attempt at suicide a real or a feigned one?"

"Well I should say it was a real one. I found him insensible and he did not come to for best part of a quarter of an hour."

"Open his cell."

"Joram I am here from the Secretary of State to ask you some questions. Answer them truly and without fear. Some months ago you made an attempt on your life."

The prisoner shuddered and hung his head.

"Don't be discouraged Joram," put in Mr. Eden kindly, "this gentleman is not a harsh judge, he will make allowances."

"Thank you gentlemen."

"What made you attempt your life?" persisted Lacy. "Was it from religious despondency?"

"That it was not. What did I know about religion before his reverence here came to the gaol? No sir I was clammed to death."

"Clammed?"

"Yes, sir, clammed and no mistake."

"North-country word for starved," explained Mr. Eden.

"No, sir, I was starved as well. It was very cold weather, and they gave me nothing but a roll of bread no bigger than my fist once a day for best part of a week. So being starved with cold and clammed with hunger I knew I couldn't live many hours more, and then the pain in my vitals was so dreadful sir I was obliged to cut it short. Ay! ay! your reverence, I know it was very wicked — but what was I to do? If I hadn't attempted my life I shouldn't be alive now. A poor fellow doesn't know what to do in such a place as this."

"Well," said Mr. Lacy, "I promise you your food shall never be tampered with again."

"Thank you, sir. Oh! I have nothing to complain of now sir; they have never clammed me since I attempted my life."

Mr. Eden. "Suicide is at a premium here."

"What was your first offence?" asked Lacy.

"Writing on my can."

"What did you write on the can?"

"I wrote 'I want to speak to the governor.'"

"Couldn't you ring and ask to see him?"

"Ring and ask? I had rung half-a-dozen times and asked to see him and could not get to see him. My hand was blistered and I wanted to ask him to put me on a different sort of work 'till such time as it could get leave to heal."

"Now, sir," said Mr. Eden, "observe the sequence of iniquity. A refractory gaoler defies the discipline of the prison. He breaks

Rule 37 and other rules by which he is ordered to be always accessible to a prisoner. The prisoner being in a strait, through which the gaoler alone can guide him, begs for an interview; unable to obtain this in his despair he writes one innocent line on his can imploring the gaoler to see him. None of the beasts say 'what has he written?' they say only here be scratches, and they put him on bread and water for an illegal period; and Mr. Hawes's new and illegal interpretation of 'bread and water,' is aimed at his life. I mean that instead of receiving three times per diem a weight of bread equal to the weight of his ordinary diets (which is clearly the intention of the bread and water statute), he has once a day four ounces of bread. So because a refractory gaoler breaks the discipline, a prisoner with whom no breach of the discipline *originated* is feloniously put to death unless he 'cuts it short' by that which in every spot of the earth but — gaol is a deadly crime in Heaven's eyes — self-murder."

"What an eye your reverence ha' got for things! Well now it doesn't sound quite fair does it? but stealing is a dog's trick, and if a man behaves like a dog he must look to be treated like one; and he will be too."

"That is right, Joram; you look at it from that point of view, and we will look at it from another."

"Open Naylor's cell."

"Naylor, what drove you to attempt suicide?"

"Oh! you know, sir."

"But this gentleman does not."

"Well, gents, they had been at me a pretty while one way and another; they put me in the jacket 'till I fainted away."

"Stop a minute, is the jacket very painful?"

"There is nothing in the world like it, sir."

"What is its effect? What sort of pain?"

"Why? all sorts! it crushes your very heart. Then it makes you ache from your hair to your heel, till you would thank and bless any man to knock you on the head. Then it takes you by the throat and pinches you and rasps you all at one time. However I don't think but what I could have stood up against

that, if I had had food enough; but how can a chap face trouble and pain and hard labour on a crumb a day? However what finally screwed up my stocking altogether gents, was their taking away my gas. It was the dark winter nights, and there was me set with an empty belly and the cell like a grave. So then I turned a little queer in the head by all account, and I saw things that — hem! — didn't suit my complaint at all, you know."

"What things?"

"Well, gents, it is all over now, but it makes me shiver still, so I don't care to be reminded; let us drop it if it is all the same to you."

"But Naylor, for the sake of other poor fellows and to oblige me."

"Oh! your reverence if I can oblige you that alters the case entirely. Well then, sir, if you must know, I saw 'Child of Hell' wrote in great letters of fire all over that side of the cell. Always every evening this was all my society as the saying is; 'Child of Hell' wrote ten times brighter than gas."

"Couldn't you shut your eyes and go to sleep?" said Mr. Lacy.

"How could I sleep? and I did shut my eyes, and then the letters they came through my eye-lids. So when this fell on the head of all my troubles I turned wild, and I said to myself one afternoon, 'Now here is my belly empty and nothing coming to it, and there is the sun a setting, and by-and-by my cell will be brimfull of hell-fire — let me end my troubles and get one night's rest if I never see another.' So I hung myself up to the bar by my hammock-strap, and that is all I remember except finding myself on my back with Mr. Fry and a lot round me some coaxing and some cursing; and when I saw where I was I fell a crying and blubbering, to think that I had so nearly broke prison and there they had got me still. I dare say Mr. Fry remembers how I took on."

"Ay my man I remember we got no thanks for bringing you to."

"I was a poor unconverted sinner then" replied Mr. Naylor

demurely "and didn't know my fault and the consequences; but I thank you now with all my heart Mr. Fry sir."

"I am to understand then that you accuse the gaoler of driving you to suicide by unlawful severities?"

"No sir I don't. I only tell you how it happened, and you shouldn't have asked me if you didn't care to know; and as for blaming folk, the man I blame the most is John Naylor. His reverence there has taught me to look at home. If I hadn't robbed honest folk I shouldn't have robbed myself of character and liberty and health, and Mr. Hawes wouldn't have robbed me of food and light and life wellnigh. Certainly there *is* a deal of ignorance and stupidity in this here gaol. The governor has no head-piece; can't understand that a prisoner is made out of the same stuff as he is — skin and belly, heart, bones an' all. I should say he wasn't fit to be trusted with the lives of a litter of pigs, let alone a couple of hundred men and women; but all is one for that; if he was born without any gumption as the saying is, I wasn't, and I didn't ought to be in a fool's power; that is my fault entirely, not the fool's; ain't it now? If I hadn't come to the mill the miller would never have grinded me! I sticks to that!"

"Well said, Naylor. Come sir, One higher than the State takes precedence here; we must on no account shake a Christian frame of mind or rekindle a sufferer's wrongs. Yes Naylor, forgive and you shall be forgiven. I am pleased with you, greatly pleased with you my poor fellow. There is my hand!"

Naylor took his reverence's hand and his very forehead reddened with pride and pleasure at so warm a word of praise from the revered mouth. They went out of the cell. Being now in the corridor Mr. Eden addressed the Government official thus:

"My proofs draw to a close. I could multiply instances ad infinitum — but what is the use? If these do not convince you you would not believe though one rose from the dead. What do I say? Have not Naylor and Joram and many others come back from the dead to tell you by what roads they were driven there? One example remains to be shown: to a philosophical mind it is

no stronger than the rest; but there are many men who can receive no very strong impression except through their senses. You may be one of these; and it is my duty to give your judgment every aid. Where is Mr. Fry? He has left us."

"I am coming to attend you sir," cried Evans from above. "Mr. Fry is gone to the governor."

"Where are we going?" asked Mr. Lacy.

"To examine a prisoner whom the gaoler tortured with the jacket, and ended by robbing him of his gas and his bed contrary to law. Evans, since you are here, relate all that happened to Edward Josephs on the fourth of this month — and mind you don't exaggerate."

"Well, sir, they had been at him for near a month overtasking him and then giving him the jacket, and starving him and overtasking him again on his empty stomach till the poor lad was a living skeleton. On the fourth the governor put him in the jacket, and there he was kept till he swooned."

"Ah!"

"Then they flung two buckets of water over him and that brought him to. Then they sent him to his cell and there shaking with cold, the governor ordered his gas to be taken away — his hands were shaking over it for a little warmth when they robbed him of that bit o' comfort."

"Hum!"

"Contrary to law!" put in Mr. Eden.

"Well, sir, he was a quiet lad not given to murmur, but at losing his gas he began to cry out so loud you might hear him all over the prison."

"What did he cry?"

"Sir, he cried MURDER!"

"Go on."

"Then I came to him and found him shivering and dripping, and crying fit to break his poor heart."

"And did you do nothing for him?"

"I did what I could, sir. I took him and twisted his bedclothes so tight round him the air could not get in, and before I left him his sobs went down and he looked like warm and

sleeping after all his troubles. Well, sir, they can tell you better that did the job, but it seems the governor sent another turnkey called Hodges to take away his bed from under him."

"Oh!"

"Well sir! oh dear me! I hope, your reverence, I shall never have to tell this story again for it chokes me every time."

And the man was unable to go on for a while.

"Well, sir, the poor thing it seems didn't cry out as he had about the gas, he took it quite quiet—that might have let them know, but some folk can see nothing till it is too late — and he gave Hodges his hand to show he bore him no malice. Eh dear! eh dear! Would to Heaven I had never seen this wicked place!"

"Wicked place indeed!" said Mr. Lacy solemnly. "You make me almost dread to ask the result."

"You shall see the result. Evans!"

Evans opened cell 15, and he and Mr. Eden stood sorrowful aside while Mr. Lacy entered the cell. The first thing he saw was a rude coffin standing upright by the window, the next a dead body lying stark upon a mattress on the floor. The official uttered a cry like the scream of a woman!

"What is this? How dare you bring me to such a place as this?"

"This is that Edward Josephs whose sufferings you have heard and pitied."

"Poor wretch! Heaven forgive us! What did he — did he —?"

"He took one step to meet inevitable death — he hanged himself that same night by his handkerchief to this bar. Turn his poor body Evans. See, sir, here is Mr. Hawes's mark upon his back. These livid stripes are from the infernal jacket and helped lash him into his grave. You are ill. Here! some wine from my flask! You will faint else!"

"Thank you! Yes, I was rather faint. It is passed. Mr. Eden, I find my life has been spent among words — things of such terrible significance are new to me. God forgive us! how came this to pass in England in the nineteenth century? The — scoundrel!"

"Kick him out of the gaol, but do not swear; it is a sin. By removing him from this his great temptation we may save even his blood-stained soul. But the souls of his victims? Oh sir when a good man is hurried to his grave our lamentations are natural but unwise; but think what he commits who hurries thieves and burglars and homicides unprepared before their eternal Judge. In this poor boy lay the materials of a saint — mild, docile, grateful, believing. I was winning him to all that is good when I fell sick. The sufferings I saw and could not stop — they made me sick. You did not know that when you let my discoloured cheeks prejudice you *against* my truth. Oh! I forgive you dear sir! Yes Heaven is inscrutable; for had I not fallen ill — yes I was leading you up to Heaven, was I not? Oh my lost sheep! my poor lost sheep!" And the faithful shepherd, at the bottom of whose wit and learning lay a heart simpler than beats in any dunce, forgot Hawes and everything else and began to mourn by the dead body of his wandering sheep.

Then in that gloomy abode of blood and tears Heaven wrought a miracle. One who for twenty years past had been an official became a man for full five minutes. Light burst on him — Nature rushed back upon her truant son and seized her long-forgotten empire. The frost and reserve of office melted like snow in summer before the sun of religion and humanity. How unreal and idle appeared now the twenty years gone in tape and circumlocution! Away went his life of shadows — his career of watery polysyllables meandering through the great desert into the Dead Sea. He awoke from his desk and saw the corpse of an Englishman murdered by routine, and the tears of a man of God dripping upon it.

Then his soul burst its desk and his heart broke its polysyllables and its tapen bonds, and the man of office came quickly to the man of God and seized his hand with both his which shook very much, and pressed it again and again and again, and his eyes glistened and his voice faltered.

"This shall never be again. How these tears honour you! but they cut me to the heart. There! there! I believe every

word you have told me now. Be comforted! you are not to blame! there were always villains in the world and fools like us that could not understand or believe in an apostle like you. We are all in fault, but not you! Be comforted! Law and order shall be restored this very day and none of these poor creatures shall suffer violence again or wrong of any sort — by God!"

So these two grasped hands and pledged faith and for a while at least joined hearts.

Mr. Eden thanked him with a grace and dignity all his own. Then he said with a winning sweetness, "Go now, my dear sir, and do your duty. Act for once upon an impulse. At this moment you see things as you will see them when you come to die. A light from Heaven shines on your path at this moment. Walk by it ere the world dims it. Go and leave me to repent the many unchristian tempers I have shown you in one short hour, my heat and bitterness and arrogance — in this solemn place."

"His unchristian temper! poor soul! there take me to the justices Mr. Evans, and you follow me as soon as you like. Yes my worthy friend I will act upon an impulse for once — Ugh!"

Wheeling rapidly out of the cell as unlike his past self as a pin-wheel in a shop drawer and ditto ignited he met at the very door Mr. Hawes!

"You have been witnessing a sad sight sir, and one that nobody, I assure you, deplores more than I do" said Mr. Hawes in a gentle and feeling tone.

Mr. Lacy answered Mr. Hawes by looking him all over from head to foot and back, then looking sternly into his eyes he turned his back on him sharp, and left him standing there without a word.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE gaoler had been out-witted by the priest. Hawes had sneaked after Fry to beg him for heaven's sake, that was the phrase he used, not to produce his journal. Fry thought this very hard, and it took Hawes ten minutes to coax him over. Mr. Eden had calculated on this, and worked with the attested

copy,while Hawes was wasting his time suppressing the original. Hawes was too cunning to accompany Fry back to Mr. Lacy; he allowed five minutes more to elapse: all which time his antagonist was pumping truth into the judge a gallon a stroke. At last up came Mr.Hawes to protect himself and baffle the parson: he came, he met Mr. Lacy at the dead prisoner's door, and read his defeat.

Mr. Lacy joined the justices in their room.

"I have one question to ask you, gentlemen, before I go: — How many attempts at suicide were made in this gaol under Captain O'Connor while sole gaoler?"

"I don't remember" replied Mr. Williams.

"It would be odd if you did, for no one such attempt took place under him."

"Are you aware how many attempts at suicide took place during the two years that this Hawes governed a part of the gaol, being kept in some little check by O'Connor, but not much, as unfortunately you encouraged the inferior officer to defy his superior? Five attempts at suicide during this period, gentlemen. And now do you know how many such attempts have occurred since Mr. Hawes has been sole gaoler?"

"I really don't know. Prisoners are always shamming," replied Mr.Woodcock.

"I do not allude to feigned attempts, of which there have been several, but to desperate attempts; some of which have left the prisoner insensible, some have resulted in his death — how many of these?"

"Four or five I believe."

"Ah, you have not thought it worth while to inquire!! Hum! — well fourteen at least. Come in Mr. Eden.

"Gentlemen, you have neglected your duty; making every allowance for your inexperience, it still is clear that you have undertaken the supervision of a gaol, and yet have exercised no actual supervision; even now the life or death of the prisoners seems to you a matter of indifference. If you are reckless on such a point as this, what chance have the minor circumstances of their welfare of being watched by you? and frankly I am

puzzled to conceive what you proposed to yourselves when you undertook an office so important and requiring so great vigilance. I say this, gentlemen, merely to explain why I cannot have the pleasure I did promise myself, of putting one of your names into the royal commission which will sit upon this prison in compliance with the chaplain's petition."

Mr. Eden bowed gratefully, and his point being formally gained, he hurried away to make up for lost time, and visit his longing prisoners. While he passed like sunshine from cell to cell, Mr. Lacy took a note or two in solemn silence, and the injustices conferred.

Mr. Palmer whispered "We had better have taken Mr. Eden's advice."

The other two snorted ill-assured defiance.

Mr. Lacy looked up. "You will hold yourselves in readiness to be examined before the commission."

At this moment Mr. Hawes walked into the room without his mask, and in his own brutal voice — the voice he spoke to prisoners with — addressed himself with great insolence of manner to Mr. Lacy. "Don't trouble yourself to hold commissions over me. I think myself worth a great deal more to the government than they have ever been to me. What they give me is little enough for what I have given them, and when insults are added to a man of honour and an old servant of the Queen, he flings his commission in your face;" and the unveiled ruffian raised his voice to a roar, and with his hand flung an imaginary commission into Mr. Lacy's face, who drew back astounded; then resuming his honeyed manner Hawes turned to the justices. "I return into your hands gentlemen the office I received from you. I thank you for the support you have afforded me in my endeavours to substitute discipline for the miserable laxity and slovenliness and dirt we found here; and your good opinion will always console me for the insults I have received from a crack-brained parson and his tools in the gaol and out of it."

"Your resignation is accepted" said Mr. Lacy coldly, and as your connexion with — gaol is now ended, in virtue of my powers from the Secretary of State, which I here produce, I

give you the use of the gaoler's house for a week that you may have time to move your effects, but for many reasons it is advisable that you should not remain in the *gaol* a single hour. Be so good therefore as to quit the gaol as soon as you conveniently can. One of the turnkeys shall assist you to convey to your house whatever you have in this building."

"I have nothing to take out of the gaol man" replied Hawes rudely, "except" — and here he did a bit of pathos and dignity, "my zeal for Her Majesty's service, and my integrity."

"Ah," replied Lacy quietly, "you won't want any help to carry them."

Mr. Hawes left the room bowing to the justices and ostentatiously ignoring the government official.

Mr. Williams shouted after him.

"He carries our respect wherever he goes," said this magistrate with a fidelity worthy a better cause.

The other two hung their heads and did not echo their chief. The tide was turned against Gaoler Hawes, and these two were not the articles to swim against a stream even though that stream was truth.

Mr. Hawes took his time. He shook hands with Fry. Who bade him farewell with regret. Who is there that somebody does not contrive to like? And rejecting even this mastiff's company he made a gloomy, solitary progress through the prison for the last time.

"How clean and beautiful it all is! it wasn't like that when I came to it, and it never will again."

Some gleams of remorse began to flit about that thick scull and self-deceiving heart, for punishment suggests remorse to sordid natures. But his strong and abiding feeling was a sincere and profound sense of ill-usage — long service — couldn't overlook a single error — ungrateful government, etc.

"Prison go to the devil now — and serve them right."

At last he drew near the outer court, and there he met a sight that raised all the fiend within him. There was Mr. Eden ushering Strutt into the garden, and telling Evans the old man was to pass his whole days there till he was better.

"So that is the way you keep the rules now you have undermined me! No cell at all. I thought what you would come to. You haven't been long getting there."

"Mr. Hawes," replied the other with perfect good temper, "Rule 34 of this prison enjoins that every prisoner shall take daily as much exercise in the open air as is necessary for his health. You have violated this rule so long that now Strutt's health requires him to pass many more hours in the air than he otherwise would; he is dying for air and amusement, and he shall have both sooner than die for the want of them, or of anything I can give him."

"And what is it to *him?*" retorted Evans with rude triumph; "he is no longer an officer of this gaol; he has got the sack and orders to quit into the bargain."

Fear is entertained that Mr. Evans had listened more or less at the door of the justices' room.

"Is this so sir?" asked Mr. Eden gravely, politely, and without a shadow of visible exultation.

"You know it is, you sneaking undermining villain; you have weathered on me, you have out-manœuvred me. When was an honest soldier a match for a parson?"

"Ah!" cried Mr. Eden; "then run to the gate, Evans, and let the men into the gaol with the printing-press and the looms. They have been waiting four hours for this."

Hawes turned black with rage.

"O I know you made sure of winning; a black-guard that loads the dice can always do that. Your triumph won't be long. I was in this gaol honoured and respected for four years till you came. You won't be four months before you are kicked out, and no one to say a good word for you. A pretty Christian; to suborn my own servants and rob me of my place and make me a beggar in my old age, a man you are not worthy to serve under, a man that served his country by sea and land before you were whelped ye black hypocrite. You a Christian! you? If I thought that I'd turn Atheist or anything, you poor back-biting — tale-telling — sneaking — undermining — false witness bearing —"

"Unhappy man" cried Mr. Eden; "turn those perverse eyes from the faults of others to your own danger. The temptations under which you fell end here; then let their veil fall from your eyes, and you may yet bless those who came between your soul and its everlasting ruin. Your victims are dead; their eternal fate is fixed by you. Heaven is more merciful — it has not struck you dead by your victim's side; it gives you, the greatest sinner of all, a chance to escape. Seize that chance. Waste no time in passion and petulance — think only of your forfeited soul. Madman, to your knees! What! dare you die as you have lived these three years past? dare you die abhorred of Heaven? Fool! see yourself as every eye on earth and in Heaven sees you. The land contains no criminal so black as you. Other homicides have struck hastily on provocation or stung by injury, or thrust or drawn by some great passion — but you have deliberately gnawed away men's lives. Others have seen their one victim die, but you have looked on your many victims dying yet not spared them. Other homicides' hands are stained, but yours are steeped in blood. To your knees MAN-slayer! I dare not promise you that a life given to penitence and charity will save so foul a soul, but it may, for Heaven's mercy is infinite. Seize on that small chance. Seize it like one who feels Satan clutching him and dragging him down to eternal flames. Life is short, eternity is close, judgment is sure. A few short years and you must meet Edward Josephs again before the Eternal Judge. What a tribunal to face, your victims opposite you! There the longstanding prejudices that save you from a felon's death here will avail you nothing. There the quibbles that pass current on earth will be blasted with the lips that dare to utter and the hearts that coin them. Before Him, who has neither body nor parts, yet created all the forms of matter, vainly will you pretend that you did not slay, because forsooth the weapons with which you struck at life were invisible and not to be comprehended by a vulgar shallow sensual earthly judge. There too the imperfection of human language will yield no leaf of shelter.

"Hope not to shift the weight of guilt upon poor Josephs there. On earth muddle-heads will call his death and the self-

murderer's by one name of 'suicide,' and so dream the two acts were one; but you cannot gull Omniscience with a word — the wise man's counter and the money of a fool. Be not deceived! As Rosamond took poison in her hand, and drank it with her own lips, and died by her own act, yet died assassinated by her rival — so died Josephs. As men taken by pirates at sea, and pricked with cold steel till in despair and pain they fling themselves into the sea — so died Josephs and his fellows murdered by you. Be not deceived! I, a minister of the gospel of mercy — I, whose character leans towards charity, tell you that if you die impenitent, so surely as the sun shines and the Bible is true, the murder of Edward Josephs and his brothers will damn your soul to the flames of hell for ever — and for ever — and for ever!

"Begone then, poor miserable creature! Do not look behind you. Fly from this scene where crime and its delusions still cling round your brain and your self- deceiving heart. Waste no more time with me; a minute lost may be a soul lost. The avenger of blood is behind you. Run quickly to your own home — go up to your secret chamber — and there fall down upon your knees before your God, and cry loud and long to him for pardon. Cry mightily for help — cry humbly and groaning for the power to repent. Away! away! Wash those red hands and that black soul in years and years of charity, in tears and tears of penitence, and in our Redeemer's blood. Begone, and darken and trouble us here no more."

The cowed gaoler shrank and cowered before the thunder and lightning of the priest, who mild by nature was awful when he rebuked an impenitent sinner out of holy writ. He slunk away, his knees trembling under him, and the first fiery seeds of remorse sown in his dry heart. He met the printing-press coming in, and the loom following it (naturally); he scowled at them and groaned. Evans held the door open for him with a look of joy that stirred all his bile again. He turned on the very threshold and spat a volley of oaths upon Evans. Evans at this put down his head like a bull, and running fiercely with the huge door, slammed it close on his heel with such ferocity,

that the report rang like a thunder-clap through the entire building, and the ex-gaoler was in the street.

Five minutes more, the printing-press and loom were re-installed, and the punishment-jacket packed up and sent to London to the Home Office. Ten minutes more, the cranks were examined by the artist in iron Mr. Eden had sent for, and all condemned, it being proved that the value of their resistance stated on their lying faces was scarce one-third of their actual resistance. So much for unerring* science!

Five minutes more Mr. Eden had placed in Mr. Lacy's hands a list of prisoners to whom a free pardon ought now to be extended, some having suffered a somewhat shorter period but a greater weight of misery than the judges had contemplated in their several sentences; and others being so shaken and depressed by separate confinement pushed to excess, that their life and reason now stood in peril for want of open air, abundant light, and free intercourse with their species. At the head of these was poor Strutt, an old man crushed to clay by separate confinement recklessly applied. So alarming was this man's torpor to Mr. Eden, that after trying in vain to interest him in the garden, that observer ventured on a very strong measure. He had learned from Strutt that he could play the fiddle; what does he do but runs and fetches his own violin into the garden, tunes it, and plays some most inspiriting rollicking old English tunes to him! A spark came into the fishy eye of Strutt. At the third tune the old fellow's fingers began to work impatiently. Mr. Eden broke off directly, put fiddle and bow into Strutt's hand, and ran off to the prison again to arrest melancholy,

* The effect of this little bit of science may be thus stated: — Men for two years had been punished as refractory for not making all day two thousand revolutions per hour of a 15lb. crank, when all the while it was a 45lb. *crank* they had been vainly struggling against all day. The proportions of this gory lie never varied. Each crank tasked the Sisyphus three times what it professed to do. It was calculated that four prisoners, on an average crank marked 10lb., had to exert an aggregate of force equal to one horse; and this exertion was prolonged, day after day, far beyond a horse's power of endurance, and in many cases on a modicum of food so scanty, that no horse ever foaled, so fed, could have drawn an arm-chair a mile.

despair, lunacy, stagnation, mortification, putrefaction, by every art that philosophy and mother-wit could suggest to Christianity.

This determined man had collected his teaching mechanics again, and he had them all into the prison the moment Hawes was out. He could not get the cranks condemned as monsters —the day was not yet come for that; so he got them condemned as liars, and in their place tasks of rational and productive labour were set to most of the prisoners, and London written to for six more trades and arts.

A copy of the prison-rules was cut into eight portions and eight female prisoners set to compose each her portion. Copies to be printed on the morrow and put up in every cell according to the wise provision of Rule 10, defied by the late gaoler for an obvious reason. Thus in an hour after the body of Hawes had passed through that gate a firm and adroit hand was wiping his gloomy soul out of the cells as we wipe a blotch of ink off a written page.

Care too was taken every prisoner should know the late gaoler was gone for ever. This was done to give the wretches a happy night. Ejaculations of thanksgiving burst from the cells every now and then; by some mysterious means the immured seemed to share the joyful tidings with their fellows, and one pulse of hope and triumph to beat and thrill through all the life that wasted and withered there encased in stone; and until sunset the faint notes of a fiddle struggled from the garden into the temple of silence and gloom, and astounded every ear.

The merry tunes as Strutt played them sounded like dirges, but they enlivened him as they sighed forth. They stirred his senses, and through his senses his mind, and through his mind his body, and so the anthropologist made a fiddle help save a life, which fact no mortal man will believe whose habit it is to chatter blindfold about man and investigate the "crustaceoni-dunculæ."

The cranks being condemned, rational industry restored, and the law reseated on the throne a man-slaughtering dunce

had usurped, the champion of human nature went home to drink his tea and write the plot of his sermon.

He had won a great battle and felt his victory. He showed it too in his own way. On the evening of this great day his voice was remarkably gentle and winning, and a celestial light seemed to dwell in his eyes: no word of exultation, nor even of self-congratulation; and he made no direct mention of the prison all the evening. His talk was about Susan's affairs, and he paid his warm thanks to her and her aunt for all they had done for him. "You have been true friends, true allies," said he; "what do I not owe you! you have supported me in a bitter struggle, and now that the day is won I can find no words to thank you as I ought."

Both these honest women coloured and glistened with pleasure, but they were too modest to be ready with praise or to bandy compliments.

"As for you, Susan, it was a master stroke your venturing into my den."

"Oh! we turn bold when a body is ill, don't we, aunt?"

"I am not shy for one at the best of times," remarked the latter.

"Under Heaven you saved my life, at least I think so, Susan, for the medicinal power of soothing influences is immense, I am sure it is apt to be underrated; and then it was you who flew to Malvern and dragged Gulson to me at the crisis of my fate; dear little true-hearted friend I am sorry to think I can never repay you."

"You forget, Mr. Eden," said Susan almost in a whisper, "I was paid beforehand."

I wish I could convey the native grace and gentle dignity of gratitude with which the farmer's daughter murmured these four words, like a duchess acknowledging a kindness.

"Eh?" inquired Mr. Eden, "oh! ah! I forgot," said he naively. "No! that is nonsense, Susan: you have still an immense Cr. against my name; but I know a way — Mrs. Davies, for as simple as I sit here you see in me the ecclesiastic that shall unite this young lady to an honest man, who, report

says, loves her very dearly; so I mean to square our little account."

"That is fair, Susan; what do you say?"

"La, aunt! why I shouldn't look upon it as a marriage at all if any clergyman but Mr. Eden said the words."

"That is right," laughed Mr. Eden, "always set some little man above some great thing, and then you will always be — a woman. I must write the plot of my sermon, ladies, but you can talk to me all the same."

He wrote and purred every now and then to the women, who purred to each other and now and then to him. Neither Hawes nor any other irritation rankled in his heart, or even stuck fast in his memory. He had two sermons to prepare for Sunday next, and he threw his mind into them as he had into the battle he had just won. "Hoc agebat."

CHAPTER XXVII.

His reverence in the late battle showed himself a strategist, and won without bringing up his reserves; if he had failed with Mr. Lacy he had another arrow behind in his quiver. He had been twice to the mayor and claimed a coroner's jury to sit on a suicide; the mayor had consented and the preliminary steps had been taken.

The morning after the gaoler's dismissal the inquest was held. Mr. Eden, Evans, Fry and others were examined, and the case came out as clear as the day and black as the night.

When twelve honest Englishmen, men of plain sense, not men of system, men taken from the public not from public offices, sat in a circle with the corpse of a countryman at tneir knees, fiebat lux; 'twas as though twelve suns had burst into a dust-hole

"Manslaughter!" cried they, and they sent their spokesman to the mayor and said yet more light must be let into this dust-hole, and the mayor said, "Ay and it shall too. I will write to London and demand more light." And the men of the public went to their own homes and told their wives and children and

neighbours what cruelties and villanies they had unearthed, and their hearers, being men and women of that people, which is a God in intellect and in heart compared with the criticasters that try to misguide it with their shallow guesses and cant and with the clerks that execute it in other men's names, cried out, "See now! What is the use our building courts of law or prisons unless they are to be open to us. Shut us out — keep walls and closed gate between us and our servants — and what comes of our courts of law and our prisons? Why they turn nests of villany in less than no time."

The twelve honest Englishmen had hardly left the gaol an hour, crying "manslaughter!" and crying "shame!" when all in a moment, "TOMB!" fell a single heavy stroke of the great prison bell. The heart of the prison leaped, and then grew cold — a long chill pause, then "TOMB!" again. The jurymen had told most of his fellow-sufferers how Josephs was driven into his grave — and now —

"TOMB!" the remorseless iron tongue crashed out one by one the last stern monosyllables of this sorrowfullest of human tales.

They put him in his coffin ("TOMB!") a boy of sixteen, who would be alive now but that caitiffs, whom God confound on earth, made life an *impossibility* to him ("TOMB!") and that Shallows and Woodcocks, whom God confound on earth, and unconscientious non-inspecting inspectors, flunkeys, humbugs, hirelings, whom God confound on earth ("TOMB!"), left these scoundrels month after month and year after year unwatched, though largely paid by the queen and the people to watch them ("TOMB!"). Look on your work, hirelings, and listen to that bell, which would not be tolling now if you had been men of brains and scruples instead of sordid hirelings. The priest was on his knees, praying for help from heaven to go through the last sad office with composure, for he feared his own heart when he should come to say "ashes to ashes" and "dust to dust" over this hapless boy, that ought to be in life still. And still the great bell tolled, and many of the prisoners were invited kindly in a whisper, to come into the chapel; but Fry

could not be spared, and Hodges fiercely refused. And now the bell stopped, and as it stopped the voice of the priest arose, "I am the resurrection and the life."

A deep and sad gloom was upon all as the last sad offices were done for this poor young creature cut short by foul play in the midst of them. And for all he could do the priest's voice trembled often, and a heavy sigh mingled more than once with the holy words.

What is that? "THIS OUR BROTHER!" — a thief our brother? — ay! the priest made no mistake, those were the words; pause on them.

Two great characters contradicted each other to the face over dead Josephs. Unholy State said, "Here is the carcass of a thief whom I and society honestly believe to be of no more importance than a dog, — so it has unfortunately got killed between us no matter how; take this carcass and bury it," said unholy State. Holy Church took the poor abused remains with reverence, prayed over them as she prays over the just, and laid them in the earth, calling them "this our brother." Judge now which is all in the wrong, unholy State or holy Church — for both cannot be right.

Now while the grave is being filled in, judge women of England and America between these two — unholy State and holy Church. The earth contains no better judges of this doubt than you. Judge, and I will bow to your verdict with a reverence I know male cliques too well to feel for them in a case where the great capacious heart alone can enlighten the clever little narrow shallow brain.

Thus in the nineteenth century — in a kind-hearted nation — under the most humane sovereign the world has ever witnessed on an earthly throne — holy Church in vain denouncing the miserable sinners that slay the thief their brother — Edward Josephs has been done to death in the queen's name — in the name of England — and in the name of the law.

But each of those great insulted names has its sworn defenders, its honoured and paid defenders.

It is not for us to suppose that men so high in honour will lay aside themselves and turn curs.

Ere I close this long story, let us hope I shall be able to relate with what zeal and honour statesmen disowned and punished wholesale manslaughter done in the name of the State; and with what zeal and horror judges disowned and punished wholesale manslaughter done in their name; and so, in all good men's eyes, washed off the blood with which a hireling had bespattered the state ermine and the snow-white robe of law.

For the present, the account between Josephs and the law stands thus: — Josephs has committed the smallest theft imaginable. He has stolen food. For this the law, professing to punish him with certain months' imprisonment, has inflicted capital punishment; has overtasked, crucified, starved — overtasked, starved, crucified — robbed him of light, of sleep, of hope, of life; has destroyed his body, and perhaps his soul. Sum total — 1st page of account —

Josephs a larcenist and a corpse. The law a liar and a felon.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOSEPHS has dropped out of our story. Mr. Hawes has got himself kicked out of our story. The other prisoners, of whom casual mention has been made, were never in our story, any more than the boy Xury in "Robinson Crusoe." There remains to us in the prison Mr. Eden and Robinson, a saint and a thief.

My readers have seen how the saint has saved the thief's life. They shall guess awhile how on earth Susan Merton can be affected by that circumstance. They have seen a set of bipeds acting on the notion that all prisoners are incurable: they have seen a thief, thus despaired of, driven towards despair, and almost made incurable through being thought so. Then they have seen this supposed incurable fall into the hands of a Christian that held "it is never too late to mend;" and generally I think that, feebly as my pen has drawn so great a character, they can calculate, by what Mr. Eden has already

done, what he will do while I am with Susan and George; what love, what eloquence, what ingenuity he will move to save this wandering sheep, to turn this thief honest, and teach him how to be honest yet not starve.

I will ask my reader to bear in mind, that the good and wise priest has no longer his hands tied by a gaoler in the interest of the foul fiend. But then, against all this, is to be set the slippery heart of a thief, a thief almost from his cradle. Here are great antagonist forces and they will be in daily almost hourly collision for months to come. In life nothing stands still; all this will work goodwards or badwards. I must leave it to work.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. EDEN'S health improved so visibly, that Susan Merton announced her immediate return to her father. It was a fixed idea in this young lady's mind, that she and Mrs. Davies had no business in the house of a saint upon earth, as she called Mr. Eden, except as nurses.

The parting of attached friends has always a touch of sadness, needless to dwell on at this time. Enough that these two parted as brother and young sister, and as spiritual adviser and advised, with warm expressions of Christian amity, and an agreement on Susan's part to write for advice and sympathy whenever needed.

On her arrival at Grassmere Farm there was Mr. Meadows to greet her.

"Well that is attentive!" cried Susan.

There was also a stranger to her, a Mr. Clinton.

As nothing remarkable occurred this evening we may as well explain this Mr. Clinton.

He was a speculator, and above all a setter on foot of rotten speculations, and a keeper on foot a little while of lame ones. No man exceeded him in the art of rose-tinting bad paper or parchment. He was sanguine and fluent. His mind had two eyes, an eagle's and a bat's; with the first he looked at the 'pros,' and with the second at the 'cons,' of a spec.

He was an old acquaintance of Meadows, and had come thirty miles out of the way to show him how to make 100 per cent. without the shadow of a risk. Meadows declined to violate the laws of Nature, but said he "if you like to stay a day or two I will introduce you to one or two who have money to fling away." And he introduced him to Mr. Merton. Now that worthy had a fair stock of latent cupidity, and Mr. Clinton was the man to tempt it.

In a very few conversations he convinced the farmer that there were a hundred ways of making money, all of them quicker than the slow process of farming and the unpleasant process of denying one's-self superfluities and growing saved pennies into pounds.

"What do you think John" said Merton one day to Meadows, "I have got a few hundreds loose. I'm half minded to try and turn them into thousands for my girl's sake. Mr. Clinton makes it clear don't you think?"

"Well I don't know," was the reply. "I have no experience in that sort of thing, but it certainly looks well the way he puts it."

In short Meadows did not discourage his friend from co-operating with Mr. Clinton; for his own part he spoke him fair, and expressed openly a favourable opinion of his talent and his various projects, and always found some excuse or other for not risking a halfpenny with him.

CHAPTER XXX.

One day Mr. Meadows walked into the post-office Farnborough, and said to Jefferies the postmaster,

"A word with you in private, Mr. Jefferies."

"Certainly Mr. Meadows — come to my back parlour sir; a fine day Mr. Meadows, but I think we shall have a shower or two."

"Shouldn't wonder. Do you know this five-pound note?"

"Can't say I do."

"Why it has passed through your hands?"

"Has it? well a good many of them pass through my hands in course of the year. I wish a few of 'em would stop on the road."

"This one did. It stuck to your fingers, as the phrase goes."

"I don't know what you mean sir" said Jefferies haughtily.

"You stole it" explained Meadows quietly.

"Take care" cried Jefferies in a loud quaver — "Take care what you say! I'll have my action of defamation against you double quick if you dare to say such a thing of me."

"So be it. You will want witnesses. Defamation is no defamation you know 'till the scandal is published. Call in your lodger."

"Ugh!"

"And call your wife!" cried Meadows, raising his voice in turn.

"Heaven forbid! Don't speak so loud for goodness' sake!"

"Hold your tongue then and don't waste my time with your gammon" said Meadows sternly. Then resuming his former manner he went on in the tone of calm explanation. "One or two in this neighbourhood lost money coming through the post. I said to myself 'Jefferies is a man that often talks of his conscience — he will be the thief —' so I baited six traps for you and you took five. This note came over from Ireland; you remember it now?"

"I am ruined! I am ruined!"

"You changed it at Evans's the grocer's; you had four sovereigns and silver for it. The other baits were a note, and two sovereigns, and two half sovereigns. You spared one sovereign, the rest you nailed. They were all marked by Lawyer Crawley. They have been traced from your hand, and lie locked up ready for next assizes. Good morning Mr. Jefferies."

Jefferies turned a cold jelly where he sat — and Meadows walked out, primed Crawley, and sent him to stroll in sight of the post-office.

Soon a quavering voice called Crawley into the post-office.

"Come into my back parlour sir. Oh! Mr. Crawley, can nothing be done? No one knows my misfortune but you and Mr. Meadows. It is not for my own sake sir, but my wife's. If she knew I had been tempted so far astray, she would never hold up her head again. Sir, if you and Mr. Meadows will let me off this once, I will take an oath on my bended knees never to offend again."

"What good will that do me?" asked Crawley contemptuously.

"Ah!" cried Jefferies a light breaking in, "will money make it right? I'll sell the coat off my back."

"Humph! If it was only me — but Mr. Meadows has such a sense of public duty, and yet — hum! — I know a way to influence him just now."

"Oh, sir! do pray use your influence with him."

"What will you do for me if I succeed?"

"Do for you? — cut myself in pieces to serve you."

"Well, Jefferies, I'm undertaking a difficult task — to turn such a man as Meadows, but I will try it and I think I shall succeed; but I must have terms. Every letter that comes here from Australia you must bring to me with your own hands directly."

"I will sir, I will."

"I shall keep it an hour or two perhaps, not more; and I shall take no money out of it."

"I will do it sir, and with pleasure. It is the least I can do for you."

"And you must find me 10*l*." The little rogue must do a bit on his own account.

"I must pinch to get it" said Jefferies ruefully.

"Pinch then" replied Crawley coolly; "and let me have it directly."

"You shall — you shall — before the day is out."

"And you must never let Meadows know I took this money of you."

"No, sir, I won't! is that all?"

"That is all."

"Then I am very grateful, sir, and I won't fail you may depend."

Thus the two battledores played with this poor little undetected one, whom his respectability no less than his roguery placed at their mercy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHENEVER Mr. Meadows could do Mr. Levi an ill turn he did; and vice versâ. They hated one another like men who differ about baptism. Susan sprinkled dewdrops of charity on each in turn.

Levi listened to her with infinite pleasure. "Your voice," said he, "is low and melodious like the voice of my own people in the East." And then she secretly quoted the New Testament to him, having first ascertained that he had never read it; and he wondered where on earth this simple girl had picked up so deep a wisdom and so lofty and self-denying a morality.

Meadows listened to her with respect from another cause; but the ill offices that kept passing between the two men counteracted her transitory influence, and fed fat the ancient grudge.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"WILL FIELDING is in the town; I'm to arrest him as agreed last night?"

"Hum! no!"

"Why I have got the judgment in my pocket and the constable at the public hard by."

"Never mind! he was saucy to me in the market yesterday — I was angry and — but anger is a snare: what shall I gain by locking him up just now? let him go."

"Well sir, your will is law" said Crawley obsequiously but sadly.

"Now to business of more importance."

"At your service, sir."

But the business of more importance was interrupted by a sudden knock at the outside door of Mr. Meadows's study.

"Well!"

"A young lady to see you."

"A young lady?" inquired Meadows with no very amiable air, "I am engaged — do you know who it is?"

"It is Farmer Merton's daughter, David says."

"Miss Merton!" cried Meadows with a marvellous change of manner. "Show her up directly. Crawley, run into the passage, quick man — and wait for signals."

He bundled Crawley out, shut the secret door, threw open both the others, and welcomed Susan warmly at the threshold.

"Well this is good of you Miss Merton to come and shine in upon me in my own house."

"I have brought your book back!" replied Susan colouring a little; "that was my errand, that is," said she, "that was partly my errand." She hesitated a moment — "I am going to Mr. Levi."

Meadows's countenance fell.

"And I wouldn't go to him without coming to you; because what I have to say to him I must say to you as well. Mr. Meadows do let me persuade you out of this bitter feeling against the poor old man. Oh! I know you will say he is worse than you are; so he is; a little; but then consider he has more excuse than you; he has never been taught how wicked it is not to forgive. You know it — but don't practise it."

Meadows looked at the simple-minded enthusiast, and his cold eye deepened in colour as it dwelt on her, and his voice dropped into the low and modulated tone which no other human creature but this ever heard from him.

"Human nature is very revengeful. Few of us are like you. It is my misfortune that I have not oftener a lesson from you; perhaps you might charm away this unchristian spirit that makes me unworthy to be your — your friend."

"Oh no! no!" cried Susan, "if I thought so should I be here?"

"Your voice and your face do make me at peace with all the world, Susan — I beg your pardon — Miss Merton."

"And why not Susan?" said the young lady kindly.

"Well! Susan is a very inviting name."

"La! Mr. Meadows," cried Susan arching her brows, "why it is a frightful name — it is so old fashioned; nobody is christened Susan now-a-days."

"It is a name for everything that is good and gentle and lovely —"

A moment more and passion would have melted all the icy barriers prudence and craft had reared round this deep heart. His voice was trembling, his cheek flushing; but he was saved by — an enemy.

"Susan!" cried a threatening voice at the door, and there stood William Fielding with a look to match.

Rage burnt in Meadows's heart.

He said brusquely "Come in," and seizing a slip of paper he wrote five words on it, and taking out a book flung it into the passage to Crawley. He then turned towards W. Fielding, who by this time had walked up to Susan. Was on the other side of the screen.

"Was told you had gone in here," said William quietly, "so I came after you."

"Now that was very attentive of you," replied Susan ironically. "It is so nice to have a sensible young man like you following for ever at one's heels — like a dog."

A world of quiet scorn embellished this little remark.

William's reply was happier than usual. "The sheep find the dog often in their way, but they are all the safer for him."

"Well I'm sure," cried Susan, her scorn giving way to anger.

Mr. Meadows put in: "I must trouble you to treat Miss Merton with proper respect when you speak to her in my house."

"Who respects her more than I?" retorted William, "but you see Mr. Meadows sheep are no match for wolves when the dog is away — so the dog is here."

"I see the dog is here and by his own invitation; all I say is that if the dog is to stay here he must behave like a man."

William gasped at this hit; he didn't trust himself to answer Meadows; in fact a blow of his fist seemed to him the only sufficient answer — he turned to Susan. "Susan, do you remember poor George's last words to me? with a tear in his eye and his hand in mine. Well, I keep my promise to him — I keep my eye upon such as I think capable of undermining my brother. This man is a schemer, Susan, and you are too simple to fathom him."

The look of surprise crafty Meadows put on here, and William Fielding's implied compliment to his own superior sagacity struck Susan as infinitely ludicrous, and she looked at Meadows and laughed like a peal of bells. Of course he looked at her and laughed with her. At this all young Fielding's self-restraint went to the winds, and he went on —

"But sooner than that, I'll twist as good a man's neck as ever schemed in Jack Meadows' shoes!"

At this defiance Meadows wheeled round on William Fielding and confronted him with his stalwart person and eyes glowing with gloomy wrath. Susan screamed with terror at William's insulting words and at the attitude of the two men, and she made a step to throw herself between them if necessary; but before words could end in blows a tap at the study door caused a diversion, and a cringing sort of voice said —

"May I come in?"

"Of course you may," shouted Meadows; "the place is public. Anybody walks into my room to-day friend or foe. Don't ask my leave — come in man whoever you are — Mr. Crawley! well, I didn't expect a call from you any more than from this one."

"Now don't you be angry, sir. I had a good reason for intruding on you this once. Jackson!"

Jackson stepped forward and touched William Fielding on the shoulder.

"You must come along with me," said he.

"What for?" inquired Fielding.

"You are arrested on this judgment," explained Crawley letting the document peep a moment from his waistcoat pocket. William threw himself into an attitude of defence. His first

impulse was to knock the officer down and run into another county, but the next moment he saw the folly and injustice of this and another sentiment overpowered the honest simple fellow — shame. He covered his face with both his hands and groaned aloud with the sense of his humiliation.

"Oh! my poor William!" cried Susan. "Oh! Mr. Meadows, can nothing be done?"

"Why, Miss Merton," said Meadows looking down, "you can't expect me to do anything for him. If it was his brother now, Lawyer Crawley shouldn't ever take him out of my house."

Susan flushed all over.

"That I am sure you would Mr. Meadows," cried she (for feeling obscured grammar). "Now see, dear William, how your temper and unworthy suspicions alienate our friends; but father shan't let you lie in prison. Mr. Meadows will you lend me a sheet of paper?"

She sat down, pen in hand, in generous excitement. While she wrote Mr. Meadows addressed Crawley —

"And now a word with you, Mr. Crawley. You and I meet on business now and then, but we are not on visiting terms that I know of. How come you to walk into my house with a constable at your back."

"Well sir I did it for the best," said Crawley apologetically. "Our man came in here, and the street door was open, and I said, 'He is a friend of Mr. Meadows, perhaps it would be more delicate to all parties to take him in-doors than in the open street.'"

"Oh, yes!" cried William, "it is bitter enough as it is, but that would have been worse — thank you for arresting me here — and now take me away and let me hide from all the world."

"Fools!" said a firm voice behind the screen.

"Fools!" At this word and a new voice Susan started up from the table and William turned his face from the wall. Meadows did more.

"Another!" cried he in utter amazement; "why, my house is an inn. Ah!"

Whilst speaking he had run round the screen and come plump upon Isaac Levi seated in a chair and looking up in his face with stern composure. His exclamation brought the others round after him and a group of excited faces encircled this old man seated sternly composed.

"Fools!" repeated he, "these tricks were stale before England was a nation. Which of you two has the judgment?"

"I sir," said Crawley at a look from Meadows.

"The amount?"

"A hundred and six thirteen four."

"Here is the money. Give me the document."

"Here, sir."

Levi read it.

"This action was taken on a bill of exchange. I must have that too."

"Here it is, sir. Would you like an acknowledgement, Mr. Levi," said Crawley obsequiously.

"No! foolish man. Are not these sufficient vouchers?"

"You are free, sir," said Crawley to William with an air of cheerful congratulation.

"Am I? Then I advise you to get out of my way, for my fingers do itch to fling you head foremost down the stairs."

On this hint out wriggled Mr. Crawley with a semicircle of bows to the company. Constable touched his frontlock and went straight away as if he was going through the opposite wall of the house. Meadows pointed after them with his finger and said to Levi —

"You see the road — get out of my house."

The old man never moved from his chair, to which he had returned after paying William's debts.

"It is not your house," said he coolly.

The other stared.

"No matter," replied Meadows sharply, "it is mine till my mortgage is paid off."

"I am here to pay it."

"Ah!"

"Principal and interest calculated up to twelve o'clock this

eleventh day of March. It wants five minutes to twelve. I offer you principal and interest — eight hundred and twenty-two pounds fourteen shillings and fivepence three farthings before these witnesses — and demand the title deeds."

Meadows hung his head, but he was not a man to waste words in mere scolding. He took the blow with forced calmness as who should say, "This is your turn — the next is mine."

"Miss Merton," said he almost in a whisper, "I never had the honour to receive you here before and I never shall again. How long do you give me to move my things?"

"Can you not guess?" inquired the other with a shade of curiosity.

"Why, of course you will put me to all the inconvenience you can. Come now, am I to move all my furniture and effects out of this great house in twenty-four hours?"

"I give you more than that."

"How kind! What, you give me a week perhaps?" asked Meadows incredulously.

"More than that, you fool! Don't you see that it is on next Lady-day you will be turned into the street. Aha! woman-worshipper, on Lady-day! A tooth for a tooth!"

And the old man ground his own teeth, which were white as ivory, and his fist clenched itself, while his eye glittered, and he swelled out from the chair, and literally bristled with hate —

"A tooth for a tooth!"

"Oh, Mr. Levi," said Susan sorrowfully, "how soon you have forgotten my last lesson!"

Meadows for a moment felt a chill of fear at the punctiliousness of revenge in this oriental whom he had made his enemy. To this succeeded the old hate multiplied by ten; but he made a monstrous effort and drove it from his face down into the recesses of his heart.

"Well," said he, "may you enjoy this house as I have done this last twelvemonth!"

"That does you credit, good Mr. Meadows," cried simple Susan, missing his meaning. Meadows continued in the same

tone, "And I must make shift with the one you vacate on Lady-day."

"Solomon teach me to out-wit this dog."

"Come Mr. Levi, I have visited Mr. Meadows and now I am going to your house."

"You shall be welcome, kindly welcome," said the old man with large and flowing courtesy.

"And will you show me," said Susan very tenderly, "where Leah used to sit?"

"Ah!"

"And where Rachael and Sarah loved to play?"

"Ah me! Ah me! Ah me! Yes! I could not show another these holy places, but I will show you."

"And will you forget awhile this unhappy quarrel and listen to my words?"

"Surely I shall listen to you: for even now your voice is to my ear like the wind sighing among the cedars of Lebanon, and the wave that plays at night upon the sands of Galilee."

"'Tis but the frail voice of a foolish woman, who loves and respects you, and yet," said Susan, her colour mantling with enthusiasm, "with it I can speak you words more beautiful than Lebanon's cedars or Galilee's shore. Ay old man, words that made the stars brighter and the sons of the morning rejoice. I will not tell you whence I had them, but you shall say surely they never came from earth, selfish cruel revengeful earth, these words that drop on our hot passions like the dew, and speak of trespasses forgiven, and peace and goodwill among men."

Oh! magic of a lovely voice speaking the truths of heaven! How still the room was as these goodly words rang in it from a pure heart. Three men there had all been raging with anger and hate; now a calming music fell like oil upon these human waves, and stilled them.

The men drooped their heads, and held their breath to make sure the balmy sounds had ceased: then Levi answered in a tone gentle, firm, and low (very different from his last,) "Susanna, bitterness fades from my heart as you speak: but ex-

perience remains:" he turned to Meadows, "When I wander forth at Lady-day she shall still be watched over though I be far away. My eye shall be here, and my hand shall still be so over you all," and raising his thin hand, he held it high up, the nails pointing downwards: it looked just like a hawk hovering over its prey. "I will say no bitterer word than that to-day;" and in fact he delivered this without apparent heat or malice.

"Come then with me Susanna — a goodly name, it comes to you from the despised people; come like peace to my dwelling Susanna — you know not this world's wiles as I do, but you can teach me the higher wisdom that controls the folly of passion and purifies the soul."

The pair were gone, and William and Meadows were left alone. The latter looked sadly and gloomily at the door by which Susan had gone out. He was in a sort of torpor. He was not conscious of William's presence.

Now the said William had a misgiving; in the country a man's roof is sacred; he had affronted Meadows under his own roof, and then Mr. Levi had come and affronted him there too.

William began to doubt whether this was not a little hard, moreover he thought he had seen Meadows brush his eye hastily with the back of his hand as Susan retired.

He came towards Meadows with his old sulky, honest, hang-the-head manner, and said, "Mr. Meadows, seems to me we have been a little hard upon you in your own house, and I am not quite easy about my share on't."

Meadows shrugged his shoulders imperceptibly.

"Well sir — I am not the Almighty to read folk's hearts — least of all such a one as yours — but if I have done you wrong I ask your pardon. Come sir, if you don't mean to undermine my brother with the girl you can give me your hand, and I can give you mine — and there 'tis."

Meadows wished this young man away, and seeing that the best way to get rid of him was to give him his hand, he turned round, and scarcely looking towards him, gave him his hand. William shook it and went away with something that sounded like a sigh. Meadows saw him out, and locked the door im-

patiently; then he flung himself into a chair, and laid his beating temples on the cold table; then he started up and walked wildly to and fro the room. The man was torn this way and that with rage, love, and remorse.

"What shall I do?" thus ran his thoughts "That angel is my only refuge, and yet to win her I shall have to walk through dirt and shame, and every sin that is. I see crimes ahead; such a heap of crimes, my flesh creeps at the number of them. Why not be like her, why not be the greatest saint that ever lived, instead of one more villain added to so many? Let me tear this terrible love out of my heart, and die. Oh! if some one would but take me by the scurf of the neck and drag me to some other country a million miles away, where I might never see my tempter again till this madness is out of me. Susan, you are an angel but you will plunge me to hell."

Now it happened while he was thus raving and suffering the preliminary pangs of wrong-doing that his old servant knocked at the outside of the door, and thrust a letter through the trap; the letter was from a country gentleman, one Mr. Chester for whom he had done business. Mr. Chester wrote from Lancashire. He informed Meadows he had succeeded to a very large property in that county — it had been shockingly mismanaged by his predecessor; he wanted a capable man's advice, and moreover all the estates thereabouts were compelled to be surveyed and valued this year, which he deplored, but since so it was he would be surveyed and valued by none but John Meadows.

"Come by return of post," added this hasty squire, "and I'll introduce you to half the landed proprietors in this county."

Meadows read this and seizing a pen wrote thus:

"DEAR SIR,

"Yours received this day at 1 P.M., and will start for your house at 6 P.M."

He threw himself on his horse, and rode to his mother's house.

"Mother, I am turned out of my house."

"Why John, you don't say so!"

"I must go into the new house I have built outside the town."

"What the one you thought to let to Mr. James."

"The same. I have got only a fortnight to move all my things. Will you do me a kindness now, will you see them put safe into the new house?"

"Me John! why I should be afraid something would go wrong."

"Well, it isn't fair of me to put this trouble on you at your age; but read this letter — there is fifteen hundred pounds waiting for me in the North."

The old woman put on her spectacles, and read the letter slowly.

"Go John! go by all means! I will see all your things moved into the new house — don't let them be a hindrance, you go. Your old mother will take care your things are not hurt moving, nor you wronged in the way of expense."

"Thank you, mother! thank you! they say there is no friend like a mother, and I dare say they are not far wrong."

"No such friend but God — none such but God," said the old woman with great emphasis and looking Meadows in the face with a searching eye.

"Well then here are the keys of the new house, and here are my keys. I am off to-night, so good-bye mother. God bless you!"

He had just turned to go, when by an unusual impulse he turned, took the old woman in his hands, almost lifted her off the ground, for she weighed light, and gave her a hasty kiss on the cheek; then he set her down and strode out of the house about his business.

When curious Hannah ran in the next moment she found the old lady in silent agitation.

"Oh, dear! What is the matter Dame Meadows?"

"Nothing at all, silly girl."

"Nothing! And look at you all of a tremble."

"He took me up all in a moment and kissed me. I dare say

it is five-and-twenty year since he kissed me last. He was a curly-headed lad then."

So this had set the poor old thing trembling.

She soon recovered her firmness, and that very evening Hannah and she slept in John's house, and the next day set to and began to move his furniture and prepare his new house for him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PETER CRAWLEY received a regular allowance during his chief's absence, and remained in constant communication with him, and was as heretofore his money-bag, his tool, his invisible hand. But if anybody had had a microscope and lots of time they might have discovered a gloomy hue spreading itself over Crawley's soul. A pleasant illusion had been rudely shaken.

All men have something they admire.

Crawley admired cunning. It is not a sublime quality, but Crawley thought it was, and revered it with pious affectionate awe. He had always thought Mr. Meadows No. 1 in cunning, but now came a doleful suspicion that he was No. 2.

Losing a portion of his veneration for the chief he had seen out-manœuvred he took the liberty of getting drunk contrary to his severe command, and being drunk and maudlin he unbosomed himself on this head to a low woman who was his confidante whenever drink loosened his tongue.

"I'm out spirits Sal. I'm tebbly out spirits. Where shall we all go to? I dinn't think there was great a man on earth z Mizza Meadows. But the worlz wide. Mizza Levi z greada man — a mudge greada man (hic). He was down upon us like a amma (hic). His Jew's eye went through our lill sgeme like a gimlet. 'Fools!' says he — that's me and Meadows, 'these dodges were used up in our famly before Lunnun was built. Fools!' Mizza Levi despises me and Meadows; and I respect him accordingly. I'm tebbly out spirits (hic)."

END OF VOL. I.

PRINTED BY BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ.

BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Reade, Charles,

It is never too late to mend a matter of fact romance ; in two volumes

Bd.: 1

Leipzig 1856

Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek -- L.angl.o.101-s(1
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11715623-5